

Issue No. 42 Winter 1991

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JERSEY BEAT




*Punk Is
Dead,
Ween
Is God*

**LUCY BROWN
ANTHROPHOBIA**

*Invasion
Of The
Generic
Funk
Weenies!*

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Distorted Creep: David Lee Roth. Photo: Howard Rosenberg

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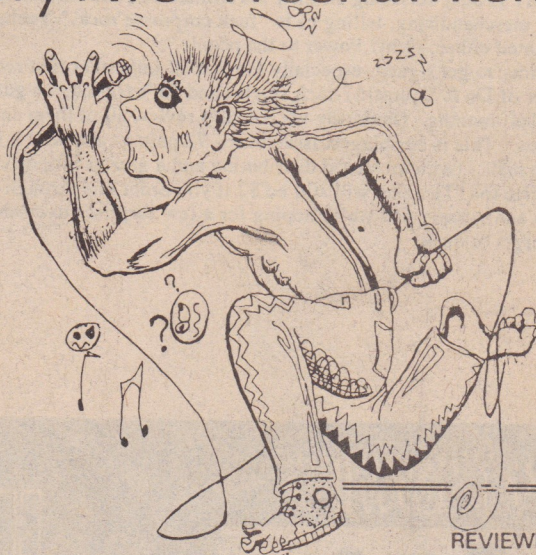
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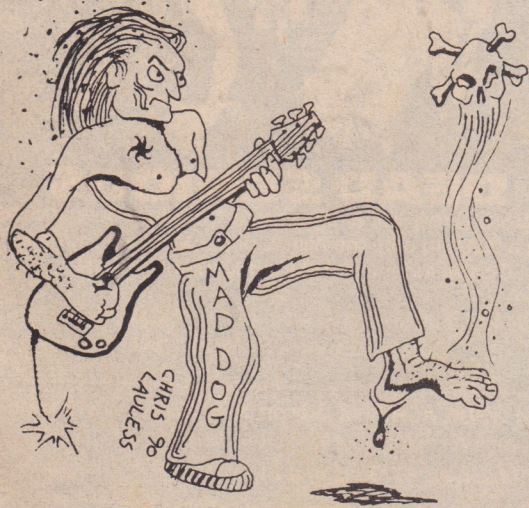
Any album, 7 inch or CD sent to us for review will be listened to, but beyond that there are no guarantees. I especially want to apologize to the many people who sent us 7-inch records this issue that we couldn't review... We received over 80 singles and 7-inch EPs since our last issue and there just wasn't room for all of them.

We automatically send a copy of the issue in which your record or tape is reviewed, so you don't have to send us money for postage or buy that issue...although donations are always appreciated.

CASSETTES, with the exception of self-released demos and cassette-only releases (such as ROIR) WILL NOT BE REVIEWED. Don't even bother sending them anymore. We don't like cassettes, and they won't be reviewed. This goes double for major labels. If struggling indies like Caroline and TwinTone can send us CD's and albums, then so can Atlantic and Metal Blade. Please get the message this time.

I am also doing a bi-weekly column for Hoboken's GOLD COAST newspaper. Any touring bands coming to the area or any local bands with demos or upcoming shows, please get in touch.

- Jim Testa



Artwork by Chris Laules, John Gall & John Crawford

Editorial: Give Peace A Chance...

As I write this, we are about a week into the war with Iraq. So far, so good, if anything "good" can be said about fighting a war. It seems like the punk rock community is dead set against this, and while I support the idea that we should "give peace a chance," I can't agree with the idea that any kind of peace is always a preferable alternative to war. No matter how awful this conflict gets before its over, imagine fighting it five years from now, when Saddam decided to attack Saudi Arabia or Egypt or Israel... and had atomic bombs to play with instead of SCUD missiles. No, the man's a dangerous imperialistic lunatic, like Hitler and Napoleon. You can't appease that sort of monster, you have to stand up to him or eventually kneel down to him. And Americans have never been very good at kneeling at the feet of tyrants. The pacifist argument that we are only fighting in the Middle East to protect a few oil fields simply doesn't wash. And the peace movement - at least what I've seen of it in New York, especially among the anarchist punkers from the ABC No Rio scene, has the unwholesome stink of self-interest and cowardice about it. It's one thing to oppose war because you think war is wrong, another to be for peace simply because you don't want to risk being drafted and being asked to sacrifice for a greater cause than your own personal interests. Think about it.

Meanwhile, back at home, the recession deepens. Forget all that baloney about the entertainment business being recession proof, too. I had to lay out \$100 towards printing this issue - a label stiffed me for advertising, and if they're not paying me, imagine all the other people who aren't getting paid! - and still didn't break even. Rough Trade - both the label and distributorship - seem poised on the edge of a black hole, and will probably go the way of JEM and Systematic soon (i.e. down the tubes, dragging dozens of indie and DIY record labels along with them). SST is busy reissuing all their old Minutemen and Husker Du records on colored vinyl, along with their Black Flag skateboards and other merchandising, telling us to "fuck corporate rock." Yeah, like Greg Ginn isn't incorporated. And I suppose none of that stuff is copyrighted either, right? Power to the people.

Bands are finding it harder to get signed, especially for that all-important first record, which probably explains why the demo tapes were scarcer and the number of Do It Yourself 7-inch singles and EP's tripled; we got over 80 7-inches between this issue and last, which was only about three and a half months. Obviously we couldn't review all of them and we apologize to anyone who got left out.

Finally, back to business. This is our biggest issue ever - 72 pages - and with it our first price increase in five years. The zine has always been \$2 through the mail... with increased distribution and a greater proportion of issues going out on consignment to stores, we had to raise the newstand price too. The zine will still be \$2 if you order one through the mail.

Next issue marks our 9th anniversary and we're hoping for a few surprises to celebrate. Until then, keep your powder dry, smoke 'em if you got 'em, and don't forget to duck.

- Jim Testa
January 25, 1991

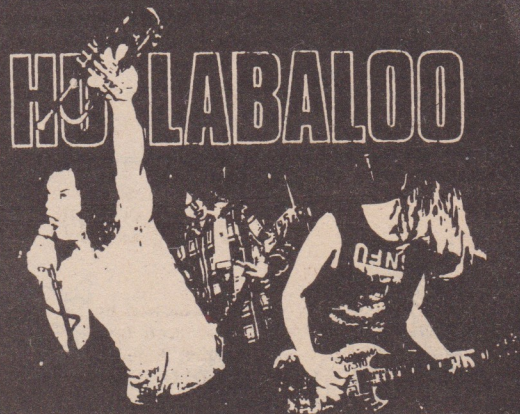
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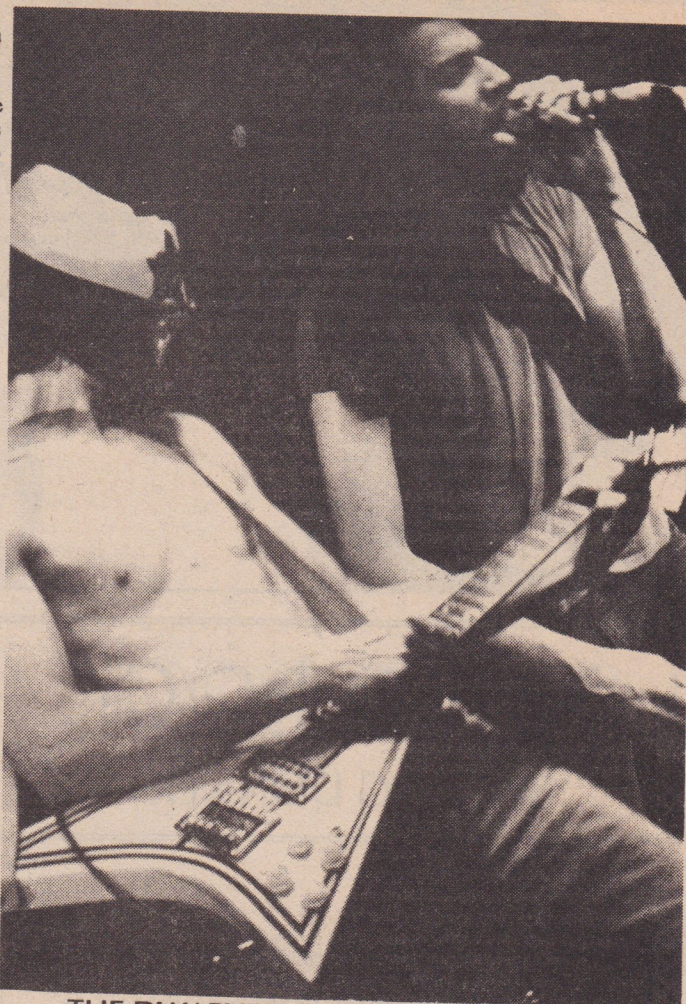
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Most of these records should really have been reviewed an issue or two ago, but seeing how I'm pretty much of a lazy fuck, this is the best I could do. Onward. Original music does pop up once in a while in the punk scene, no matter how many people bitch & moan that everything has been done a million times before. They're usually the same dopes that are just too lazy to look for it. A good example of this is the newest lp from ALL, "Allroy Saves," on Cruz Records. It's definitely one of the more unique albums to come out this year. It's got the singalong pop punk element that everyone loves them for, but there's also a lot of strange twisted hooks and quirky, offbeat rhythms which disjoint totally before getting back to the more catchy choruses of the songs. A great theme, too. This one's gonna be real hard for the punk crew to digest since it's All's most groundbreaking record to date, but fear not. It still rocks hard. There's even a song written by ex-frontman Milo. Cruz Records has a pretty good record up to now, seeing how they also just released the new CHEMICAL PEOPLE album, "The Right Thing." The Chems were never weak in the power pop department and this one's not gonna set them back any either. "The Right Thing" does a great job of exploring new territory, which includes the likes of Sonic Youth, Adolescents, Jawbreaker, Kiss, and the power of Black Flag and The Descendants. Everybody seems to be in such an uproar about the Chems being really sexist. This album totally sheds that ideology, with lyrics being more on the personal side. Bassist Ed Urlik seems to constantly outdo himself with every release, and Dave Naz' vocals are ace on this one.

Sub Pop has also been puttin' out some really hard punk albums and singles lately, as well as straying from the stagnant retro 70's sludge that everyone's really starting to get bored with. DWARVES win my vote for putting out the single of the year, "Astro Boy." This one reminded me of how I felt when I first got into the punk thing. I jumped up and down on my bed and thrashed about the room in wild rebellious rage. The Dwarves will do that to ya. Although their lp, "Blood Guts And Pussy," isn't really as raging as the two non-lp cuts on the single, it's still pretty fierce. Among the 90's punk rock hits are "Fuck You Up And Get High," "Drug Store," and "Detention Girl." Incidentally, you haven't lived until you've seen 'em live. Punk rock rules!



THE DWARVES

Photo by Michele Taylor

THIS MONTH'S HATE

by John Lisa

One of the biggest record scams these days besides colored vinyl is getting your releases produced by some big shot underground personality. Case in point: A new band by the name of SKIDMARKS had their lp produced by Brett of Bad Religion. The lp is really an excellent release, sorta like a cross between mid-paced DRI and the recently disbanded SNFU. The lyrics are intelligent, well thought out and the music is catchy and progressive. So why the hell did they need a huge sticker on the front saying "PRODUCED BY BRETT RELIGION"? I guess they're just not too confident it would sell on its own merits. Why should I give a shit if Brett Religion produced their album? If anything, it's just gonna tell me that it's gonna sound like the last three Bad Religion albums, all the same. But I guess I really shouldn't slag Bad Religion. They've had a pretty successful formula for the last three records. Their latest, "Against The Grain," deviates from the last slew of BR releases a little bit, but enough to be noticeable. And although there are plenty of spots on "Against The Grain" where you'll swear they had written that song before, you still can't argue the fact that this one is the best in their career. These tunes are catchier than ever before and they've still got loads of power and harmony. And whether Brett likes to admit it or not, metal is creeping into their sound.

L-7 also have a great release out on Sub Pop but I guess you already know that. Without trying to sound sexist, I really don't like many all-girl bands. But L-7 have that hateful sound about them. They play hard, tight crunchcore with plenty o' melody and tasty riffs. Sub Pop scored with these girls. "Smell The Magic" is a six-song gem as well as an instant classic. It's also pressed on ltd colored wax for the collector scum.

Over on the Amphetamine Reptile scene, we have a band called VERTIGO. Their first, self-titled lp is about the only credible release on AmRep since the last Halo Of Flies release. From the disturbing cover art to the twisted, heavy post-punk tunes, this one does more than hold its own. Even though the sound is typical AmRep, there's also a lot of Kiss influence which shines through.

The album of the year has to go to the LEMONHEADS, who have consistently put out one great record after another since the beginning. "Lovey" (their first on Atlantic) is a prime cut if ever there was one. Evan Dando's songwriting just can't be beat. The sound is pretty consistent in light of the many lineup changes. The prior lp, "Lick," was almost as good, but it was just too short and there was a throwaway song or two, the rumored excuse being that they just threw the lp together to satisfy their contract with Taang. "Lovey" is a full on killer and I'm sure Evan's vocals will make millions of girls swoon with love. Look for Joey Darone of The Fiendz at the next Lemonheads show, tell him how you love "Lovey," and you just might get on the guest list for the next ten Fiendz shows.



HARD ROCK

BY CRAIG DONNER

LIMBOMANIACS

Stinky Grooves (In Effect)

If I could build a band from scratch, I'd build the scariest fuckin' group ever. First, my boys would rock with the soul and style of the Red Hot Chili Peppers. I'd add some Fishbone for groove, and sample bits of Public Enemy for an edge. I'd throw in the wackiness of Faith No More and buy the sickest sense of humor I could find. I'd also think of the absolutely coolest name for my band. Something like...hell, the Limbomaniacs did all the work for me.

These sick puppies border on abnormal - they're definitely perverse - but what the fuck. They groove like animals on the tunes "Butt Funkin'" and "Toilet's Flooded," an ode to a john wounded in action that gives life to a monstrous shit: "The toilet's flooded/the load won't fit/the toilet's flooded/with a great big shit/We didn't have any clue/because he didn't cut a fart/but what he left in my bowl/was a work of art."

BUCK PETS

Mercuritones, CD
Island

Somewhere along the line, we stopped listening to rock and roll and started listening to heavy metal. Or punk. Or alternative. All of a sudden, every style of music had its own name tag trailing behind it like an annoying little brother, and ultimately got lumped into some anonymous category. It's as if the record companies decided to save space in their filing cabinets by throwing all bands with loud guitars into one drawer and all bands with fast music into another. And for some reason, we accepted this nonsense.

But the Buck Pets didn't.

They went right along playing rock 'n roll. Not metal, not punk, not anything but driving, ass-kicking rock 'n roll. Sit back, pop open a beer, throw the peanut shells on the floor, and enjoy.

BUCK PETS

TOP 10

While dusting my CD's last week, I did the most pretentious thing I could and made a list of my top 10 favorite records of 1990. And considering no one was home at the time for me to bore with my list, I've decided to let you share in on my self-serving, unimportant, and completely superficial piece of dribble:

10. Maggie's Dream - Maggie's Dream
9. Urban Dance Squad - Mental Floss For The Globe
8. Goo Goo Dolls - Hold Me Up
7. Limbomaniacs - Stinky Grooves
6. Love/Hate - Blackout In The Red Room
5. Scatterbrain - Here Comes Trouble
4. Primus - Frizzle Fry
3. Kings X - faith, hope and love by kings x
2. Queensryche - Empire
1. Psychefunkapus - lp

HARMZWAY

Demo - Amazing Maze, PO Box 282 Cranbury NJ 08512

The hormones of young girls are gonna explode. What 13 yr old teenybopper armed with her Poison shirt and Slaughter headband can resist three cute guys wearing more leather than an alligator, with hair streaming down their backs and playing music so derivative and so generic that it's sure to be a hit? Lead singer Doug Bitonti sounds a lot like Gary Cherone of Extreme, and the band would also, if they were more than just average musicians. But to snag a record deal, you don't have to be anything more than sellable, and that Harmzway is.

etc...

demo - 95 Ladd Avenue, Staten Island NY 10312

A very cool demo that sounds every bit as professional as what's playing on MTV and hard rock radio stations around the country. This Staten Island local plays bluesy hard rock that, at its most commercial, still comes across with more energy than most pop metal bands. "The Chase" has a riff as nasty as three day old coffee while "Black Hat" has the most outrageous bassline. The bluesy ballad "What Comes Around" shows that a hard rock band can deliver a mellow tune without sounding like Winger. "Tight Hold" runs well over five minutes, which is two minutes and one verse too long, but one clunker can't ruin this demo. There's something very promising about etc... [And by a weird coincidence, the author of this column is in the band. - Jersey Beat Truth In Advertising Dept.]

MUCKY PUP

Now - Torrid Records

There's something comforting in listening to a band that sings one verse songs with lyrics like "I hate everybody, so who the fuck are you?" There's something even more comforting in listening to a band whose lead singer should touch a microphone

only when working in a drive-in window at Kentucky Fried Chicken. But the most comforting thing about this band is that they take themselves about as seriously as the bearded lady from the circus.

As funk, rap and metal continue to gel into one magnificent blob of mutated music, Mucky Pup grabs the funky bass by the tips of its strings and pumps up the low end for a funk'n' good time. "Mucky Pumpin' Beat" has a groove big enough to suck in a Mack Truck, and "Headbanger's Ball & 120 Minutes," with its Homer Simpson samples, can raise the dead for a few slams in the pit.

On NOW, Mucky Pup's third album, the band shifts between the funk and its own lightweight version of hardcore. But unlike Scatterbrain, who pound the two styles into one, Mucky Pup isolates them, and ultimately winds up with a distinct, if not uneven, lp. The production is crisp on the surface but underneath, a lifeless void drains much vigor from the sound, at least on the cassette I received.

But who can resist Baby Chris' crooning like a dejected Frank Sinatra on the acoustic "My Hands, Your Neck," a spellbinding love song about strangling the one closest to you? "I want to wrap my hands around your neck/I'd like to see your eyes bulge out of your head." Ahhh.

ON STAGE:

SUICIDAL TENDENCIES, L'Amour Brooklyn, NY - November 23

When catching a band like Suicidal Tendencies in concert, you expect to leave the club with a bruise or two. You'd be upset if you didn't. But standing in the middle of a massive pit that made a bullfight look like nursery school was ridiculous. Seven fights erupted only 15 minutes into the show, and by the time I kicked my way to the exit, another four or five had started.

As for Suicidal, they were the smart ones. At the start of the show, the L'Amour dj announced that anyone caught stage diving would get thrown out on his ass. So while 1000 or so morons killed themselves on the floor of the club, the band jumped around on stage, their only worry being whether their roadies would round up enough girls for the post-show party. The only reason I hung around for 40 minutes was that I had the time of my life listening to vocalist Mike Muir babble like a committed psychotic. The moral: Stage dive head-first one time too many and this could be you!

KINGS X

Faith Hope Love - Megaforce

Doug Pinnick, the lead singer of Kings X, stands well over 6-feet tall and has a black mohawk that shoot up some six or seven inches. Onstage, he swirls and spins with uncontrollable abandon, his awkwardness very apparent. But when Pinnick sets himself up in front of his mike, his 12-stringed left-handed bass ready to fire out bulldozer rhythms, you forget what the man looks like and throw yourself into the music.

Art rock has grown faster than a fat woman chowing on Twinkies, with bands like Kings X and the masters of it all, Rush, taking the sound out of underground joints and into the mainstream. Kings X mixed guitar riffs moving slower than an old man behind the wheel of a '49 Plymouth with atomic blasts of distortion and harmonies reminiscent of the Beatles. Pinnick wails like a crazed preacher delivering his sermon, his voice closer to gospel and R&B than metal. Guitarist Ty Tabor jumps from Eddie Van Halen solos to snail-paced thrashy riffs without flinching, and drummer Jerry Gaskill, who looks too much like Jesus Christ for me, lays down a low-end beat as thick and heavy as concrete. The band's third lp, "faith hope and love by kings x," is a wonderful exercise in intelligent, well-conceived and absorbing music. Live, they leave little doubt about their talent, creating layers of sound without overdubs, computers, multi-tracking or extra musicians.

SLOPPY SECONDS



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What's LEFT! By Mike Hale

SELF-CENSORSHIP

Frankly, I am infuriated that people who believe as I do in the First Amendment

Cunt

Amendment have our backs up against the wall defending scum

Fuck

like Andrew Dice Clay or Guns'N'Roses or Two Live Crew. If record

Dick

labels would just police themselves a little better - and not release crap that shamelessly denigrates and defames women, gays, or other

Suicide

minorities for a cheap laugh and a quick buck - this whole mess wouldn't have started in the first place.



LEARN

"It would be nice if they could make that leap to form an alliance with people who are also at the bottom instead of just echoing the prejudices of the power structure."

No time for girls.
God Crazy



YOU CAN'T STOP PROGRESS.

MUST

BE

Bigotry,

HATE:

Blatting the Victim

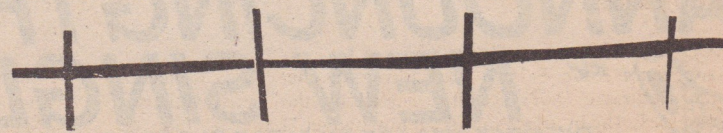
December 20, 1989

civilians killed during the U.S. invasion of Panama

On March 29, President Bush gave his first speech on AIDS...

fourteen months since taking office...in that time over 19,535 Americans died from AIDS... the U.S. government is letting people with AIDS fight a war without the weapons needed to win... this is a sham...this is hypocrisy...this is murder!

Above: Bombed-out buildings from the U.S. invasion of Panama in Colon, the country's second largest city.



Queer Nation

non-Catholic

HOMO EROTIC IT'S SO GOOD

PUMP UP Christian Sister

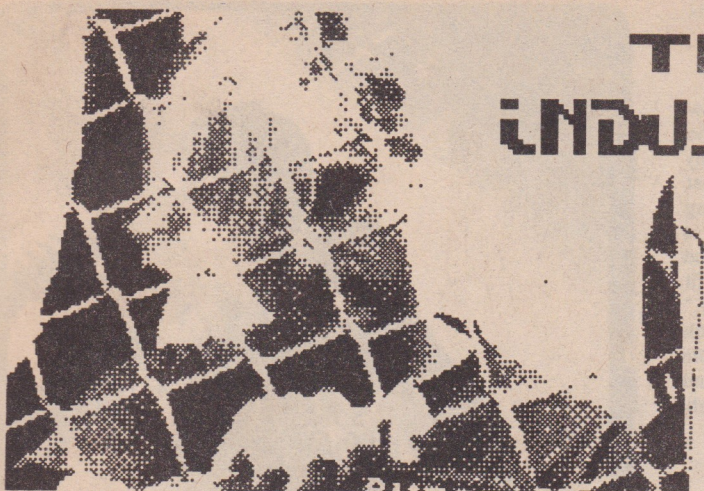
Christmas-Free America

the property of the mother.

the current U.S. military buildup in the Persian Gulf

"Operation Just Cause"

Over 26,000 troops were sent into Panama to arrest one man Noriega



THE INDUSTRIAL shoppe

by
*Michael
Hale*

It was not accidental that three of the best records we received for this issue are on KK, via Cargo. It was also no accident that these were not WaxTrax releases. Think About It -- Th, Th, Think About It... Cargo, somewhat of a mysterious label, calling Montreal, Chicago, and San Diego (?) home, seems to impress with its latest batch of Industrial/Dance produkt. Particularly useful for club programming is Kode IV's lp, followed closely by Vomito Negro, while Cat Rapes Dog has all those danse beats plus the added "amusement" of, say, Laibach or Borghesia. Lock your HATS off to Cargo, and HEARS to keeping up the grEAT work in its nu INDUSTRIAL division. In OTHER news, Alien Dog Star reportedly OD'd on Newyears eve, yet was revived; too bad for electro-industrial-synth-danse. He's gone too far, the new "Metal-Ministry" blows big-time, and I hope 91's gonna be the year Al either realises how bad he's become or just packs it in totally... Die Warzau is the great Chicago hope of the 9T's! Speaking of bands being "ouddone" by those they've influenced, if New Order continues at the pace set by their latest single, "England," BoxCar just may outdo THEM this year too. Skinny Puppy's latest lp is ok and growing on me, and I guess I enjoyed their Ritz show more than I thought at the time, the Pit Bulls of Rock and all that. Yeah, yeah, yep... Much better than Al Dogshit's RevCo! Well, now that I've said all the usual things in the usual way, Onto the reviews, comrades!

CAT RAPES DOG - Guns & Gasoline (Cargo/KK)

Excellent!! A new LP from Sweden's own "pretty boys" of industry, Cat Rapes Dog. This group scores extra points for looking like AHA, yet sounding even more demonic and ridiculous than Laibach! Using that as a start-point, imagine if Nitzer Ebb's programs (i.e. drums/keys/samples) backed up the 'bachs vocal stylings. Quite a groovy combo, I must admit. This LP kicks in with a DIS on the Flag-waving macho-type called, typically enough, "The American Dream," a mid-tempo synth-oriented track with a Pop Will Eat Itself sample to boot: "Time To Get Ugly!" Cool. Other standout cuts include the title track, which at this point in history could just be Prez-Boy Georgie's slogan - "God, Guns & Gasoline," think about it. "Mental" goes for another right-wing target with the lines "Let the children come to me/little girls especially/I'll beat their flesh free from sin/ to the rhythm of a heavenly hymn." The Cat crew do have a sense of humor tho, with songs like "Junk Jazz" (an awful noise from Miles & the boys) and "An Ass For A Brain" (Danforth Quayle who?) AHM! Highly recommended, folks -- and they look great too!

KODE IV - Possessed (Cargo/KK)

San Fran's Kode 4 is up next filling the heavily sequenced/industrial/danse shoes recently vacated by the metal-Ministry. Possessed, the lp, clocks in like a low-budget "Land Of Rape & Honey." This band (a duo) knows their sampler and "Possessed"

plays like a schizoid demonstration of an evil piece of electronic equipment. The only thing missing here is a strong vocal track - it'd be nice if Kode 4 had more to grab onto than just excellent production & samples. An absolute must for club dj's!!!

VOMITO NEGRO - Human (Cargo/KK)

Kinda a gothic cross between Front 242 and Alien Sex Fiend here. Vomito Negro's sixth release on KK Records is all the moody, Newbeat-ish danse experience it should be. The most upbeat cuts, "Meeting Eyes" and "In Strict Tempo," recall the early daze of electronic muzak. A more simplistic/innocent approach and sound than the newer "industrial" hi-tech fare. My personal fave on here, "Black Power," is a mellow groove ala' CabVoltaire with Puppy-ish vocals. And with a brighter, more techno production, "The City Dump" could be the first newbeat song to mix perfectly with Acid, maybe they'll remix it!

A GUY CALLED GERALD - AutoManik (CBS)

From the moment this LP starts off with "To The Other Side," you know you're in for a non-stop "Trance-Dance" groove-thang. A Guy Called Gerald, of "Pacific State," "Voodoo Ray," and more recently "FX" (included here) fame, has that techno-keyboard Euro-dance sound down to a cuppa tea. If ya still ain't hearin' it, think 808State, with yet more soul. Only problem with this LP is that the title track kicks waaaay better on the promo-only CD single (the "Live Shotgun Mixx"); here, it's bland and mellow and don't go nowhere fast. Oh well. There's plenty of other tunes that do, like: "Emotions Electric," a Delight-ful house ala' KISS-FM groove, or "I Feel Rhythm," on which a slower R&B dance sound abounds, and even better yet, "Subscape," which recalls Gerald's 808 daze. One of the better lp's to come outta Manchester lately.

CHRIS AND COSEY - Reflection (WaxTrax Compilation lp)

I have not let myself be taken in by history.
I found the experience most disagreeable.

KMFDM - Naive (WaxTrax)

One of their better efforts to date, this. KMFDM, out of Germany, toured with the metal-Ministry this time around and boy, does it show on their latest 12-inch, "Godlike." Thankfully, this lp was recorded before the Bad Influence of the Alien Dogshit gang got to 'em. The strength of "Naive" is in its diversity -- mostly comprised of hardedged danse, they branch out to swing and dub-styled rhythms tastefully. As for their sound base, "[KMFDM]...we give a shit on copyrights, or guitar licks - we just take what we like," says Sasha Konietzko, the unit's frontman. So, as you can imagine, samples breed like crazy, although most of them're musical like more notes than talking. KMFDM also remind me a lot of The Thrill Kill Kult in the way they both combine "real" sounding guitar/bass riffs with

electronic backings and heavily-affected vocals. Production is also of a similar fare. Check it ain't wimpy synth-pop.

FRONT LINE ASSEMBLY - Caustic Grip (WaxTrax)
You could say that Front Line Assembly are one of the few electronic Industrial bands "sticking to their guns" and you'd be most correct. FLA's mainman Bill Leeb, a member of Skinny Puppy until the "Stairs & Flowers" 12", has remained true to that sort of gothic-experimental danse-groove, without once straying out to the metal wasteland. A slight problem with Caustic Grip is its lack of variety - seems every song just cranks along at around 126 bpm, sounding all heavy & scary, but in need of the benefit of the unexpected. The standout cut, therefore, is "Overkill," where FLA switch into a kind of Nitzer Ebb overdrive, much more uptempo and driving than the rest of the lp. From "Provision," the dance floor pick-hit, to the atmosphere and mood of "Threshold," Caustic Grip is an excellent addition to the Industrial Danse Floor (IDF).

KILLING JOKE - Extremeties (Noise/BMG)
Well, they're back. K.Joke, the gos of that Art-Punk Noise-Groove thing, who have undoubtedly influenced so many great bands, definitely satisfy your urge for primal, almost metallic, riffing with "Money Is Not Our God," this new lp's lead off cut. "Extremities," the song, has a keyboard sound that's like Metal Acidhouse, if you can imagine that. And "Slip Stream" has that driving tom-tom/guitar interplay that made "Eighties" the awesome classick it 'twas. The tone of this lp reminds me of 1982's Revelations, 'cos each time ya think you're infer a "Nighttime"-like synth dance, you get hit over the head with thrash snare cracks and distorto guitar riffs. This Ain't No Disco, this lineup puts "Killing" back into the Joke.

FEAR OF FALLING - "V.E." (SoHo)
This re-mix - unlike FoF's latest CD, "Simple Lessons" - is an excellent Techno-Danse rave, with a terrific drum sound/samples and vocal inflections. It's actually quite surprising such a straight ahead "rock" band can pull off this sort of sound so convincingly. After seeing the band live and/or hearing their lp/cd, you'd think some big danse-remix producer came in and totally re-worked this for them. This is all meant to compliment "V.E.," and not take away from Fear Of Falling, although I found it hard to appreciate any of their other material on the same level as this remix.

BOX CAR - Vertigo (Nettwerk)
"Live In Sydney" (Arista Video)

I don't care if this group's the Australian New Order with little or no originality. I love this CD to death anyways! "Gas Stop" (or "Who Do You Think You Are") is a house-ish groove with that bouncy piano sound that makes that genre so appealing. I can't believe this wasn't a Hot 97 hit, which isn't as far out to lunch as it may seem. "Freemason" (included here) made Medium Rotation on that station shortly after its release. A Nettwerk record on NY commercial radio? WhAT IS this world coming to?!? "Insect," BoxCar's second 12", is up next with its NOrder groove and ABC-ish vocal stylings; add a few samples to the mix and you begin to realize the "Nettwerk" logo wasn't printed here by accident. "Leorie," with its African-type (WorldBeat?) samples, is my fave instrumental at the moment. If you've been avoiding Severed Heads, thinking they're too appealing, this is a similar offering so you've been warned. But if you enjoy lighter, as well as grating, danse muzik, by all means get this.

Above all, their video is worth seeing, if only to find out BoxCar's actual lineup, i.e. who does what. All concert footage, however, does become as repetitive as all get out. I was surprised to find they've two keyboards, drummer (& machine), singer/guitarist, and NO bass player, as when I first heard "Freemason," the NewOrderish bass lines are what drew me in. Stage presence is more akin to InfoSociety than New Order, as they bounce around the whole show, no moody tension-builders, they. Other than the "promo" purposes it was intended for, I see little use for this vid, really.



SKINNY PUPPY

Photo by Michele Taylor

INDUSTRIAL shop

INDUSTRIAL SHOP/TECHNO TUESDAY TOP 12 PLAYLIST

1. DIE WARZAU - Bodybag 12"
2. KODE IV - Possessed lp
3. UNTIL DECEMBER - Live Alone 12"
4. THRILLKILLKULT - Cuz Its Hot 12"
5. KMFDM - Naive lp
6. BOX CAR - Vertigo lp
7. THE THE - Infected 12"
8. SKINNY PUPPY - Rabies lp
9. TONES ON TAIL - Christian Says/TOT Comp
10. MOEV - In And Out CD-Single
11. JACKOFFICERS - DigiDump CD
12. MINISTRY - Twitch lp

SKINNY PUPPY - "Tormentor" 12-inch (Nettwerk)
Too Dark Park (Nettwerk CD)
Live, at The Ritz, NYC 11/16/90

The 12" is fairly non-descript; dansable, yet leaves little if no impression on me. On the album, the Puppies lose big points for the AWFUL hippie-ish artwork (no thanks to Jim Cummins) and the music contained therein hardly makes up for it. This is a different Puppy than we've come to know & love. It's almost too musical (for them) and samples are few and far between. One of the better songs, "Spasmolytic," even has all real drums (as in NO programs) on it! "Grave Wisdom" is the closest we get to the vintage Puppy sound. A lot of this stuff is just a big mess.

And that's a perfect way to start the live review as well - the older material sounded great, "Testure" and "Tin Omen" were a treat to hear live, but being unfamiliar with "...Park," most of their show was just a noisy, chaotic mess. Whereas they used to have a concise handle on their "wall of noise," now it seems as if they've Lost Control. The stage show, tho, was brilliant: moving platforms, lights galore, some smoke (although it was Never Enough), and this Bowie-esque Alien Robot thing that Nivek O. eventually entered and manipulated, and the video camera in it too. Slides & films were also running throughout. I just wish they didn't rely so much on the "Dark Park" material, being it palls in comparison to their other material. An Experience Indeed.

MINISTRY - In Case You Didn't Feel Like Showing Up (Sire CD)

Usually, the best gets saved for last, but in this case, an exception. Only Kidding, for all the Ministry bashing done in this column, this mini-lp is actually quite worthwhile. Except for "So What," all tracks are top quality AI. It's all the Thrash stuff, tho - So my biggest complaint is: Why NOTHING off TWITCH, their best to date (in my opinion)? AND why so short? Only six, count'em, six songs! I mean, if AI's all about anti-Corporate

the INDUSTRIAL shop by MICHAEL HALE

attitude and giving the people what they want and the rest of that rockgod interview stuff, why ain't there like TWENTY-SIX songs on here? OH, the accompanying video (reviewed in JB#41) is even better - you get to see how "bad" AI's looking these days, sportin' that (ick) Cowboy Hat. Seriously, tho, the video's got alot of cool graphics and FX to offer and Jello Biafra even gets the spotlight for a minute; do see!

Dat's all fer dis tyme, kids -- DON'T FORGET, you can catch me EVERY THURSDAY night (10 - 2) at THE ROXY in New Brunswick (201 545-8971) spinning the coolest Alternative, Industrial, New Beat and Acid sounds AND whenever CROCODILE SHOP plays out, where I put my views where my growl is. Take Kare, Stay Left, Meat Is Murder -- Sexism, Racism, and Homophobia are all OUT. Peace & Groovy Eggplants are IN!! C-ya!

MORDAM RECORDS PO Box 988 SF, CA 94101



Don't waste a dime on that retread shit...

Hear the band that buries those floppy hair geeks:

VICTIMS FAMILY "White Bread Blues"

The third album produced in whap-o slap-o sound by John Wright of Nomeansno. LP \$7 postpaid. Cassette w/xtra track \$7
CD includes previous album "Things I Hate To Admit" \$10

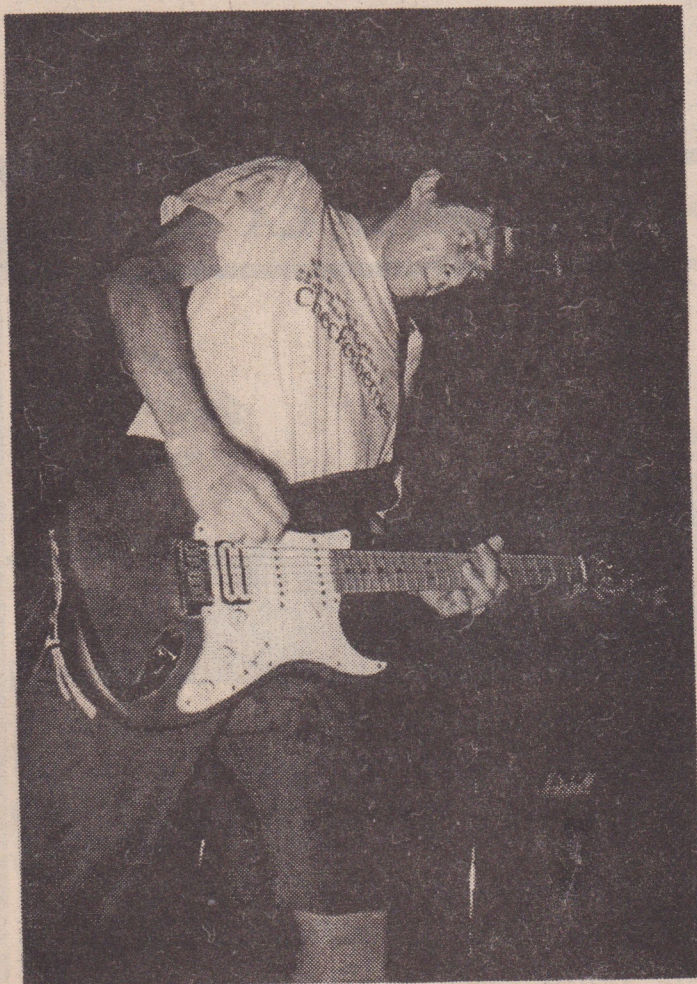
1990

JIM DeROGATIS

Reasons For Living, 1990

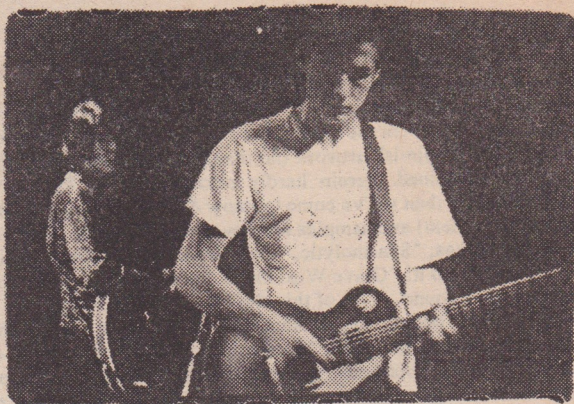
1. Neil Young - Ragged Glory
2. Eno/Cale - Wrong Way Up
3. Redd Kross - Third Eye
4. Galaxie 500 - This is Our Music
5. Teenage Fan Club - Catholic Education
6. Cale/Reed - Songs For 'Drella
7. Yo La Tengo - Fakebook
8. Tiny Lights - Hot Chocolate Massage
9. Big Dipper - Slam
10. Boiled In Lead - Orb
11. 27 Various - Approximately

Also: Betty Boo, Deee-Lite, and Madonna (for "Justify My Love") but strictly for sexual reasons.



PHLEG CAMP

Photo by Shawn Scallen



GALAXIE 500

Photo by Michele Taylor

SHAWN SCALLEN

Top 11 Things I Liked In 1990

1. Jawbox - EP and live
2. Fugazi - Repeater
3. Rollins Band - Turned On CD
4. Consolidated - The Myth Of Rock and live
5. Anthrax - Persistence Of Time
6. Cop Shoot Cop - Consumer Revolt
7. Dwarves - Blood, Guts & Pussy
8. Jawbreaker - Unfun
9. Phleg Camp - Demo
10. Ministry - live
11. Sold Out fanzine

TOM ANGELLI

Top 10 Alphabetized Punk Junk Of 1990

Bad Religion - ...Against The Grain
 Naked Raygun - Raygun, Naked Raygun
 Dinosaur Jr. - 7"
 Fuel - 7"
 Ignition - Oriflying Mysticle Of...
 Janes Addiction - Ritual de lo Habitual
 Jawbreaker - Unfun
 Samiam - Samiam lp
 Snuff - Cha Cha
 NYC Ska Live Compilation

SAL CANNESSTRA

"The Year They Forgot How To Rock"

Yo La Tengo - Fakebook
 Soul Asylum - And The Horse They Rode In On
 Fugazi - Repeater
 Sonic Youth - Goo
 Posies - Dear 23
 Redd Kross - Third Eye
 Replacements - All Shook Down
 NRBQ - Peek A Boo (Best Of NRBQ)
 Iggy Pop - Brick By Brick
 Neil Young - Ragged Glory

DEBI ROTMIL
My Personal Best/1990

The Sundays - Reading Writing & Arithmetic
Blue Aeroplanes - Swagger
Happy Mondays - Halleluja
Theodore - CBS Alternative Music Sampler
Television Personalities - Privilege
Pixies - Bossanova
The Breeders - Pod
Cocteau Twins - Heaven Or Las Vegas
Dharma Burns - Bliss
Public Image Ltd. - The Greatest Hits, So FAR

JOHN LISA
My Pretentious Top 10 For 1990

- 1 (tie) Shudder To Think - 10 Spot
- Neurosis - The Word As Law
- 3 Pale - "Ten Year Reunion" 7"
- 4 Cringer - "Karin" 7"
- 5 Jawbreaker - Unfun lp
- 6 Dwarves - "Astro Boy" 7"
- 7 Fugazi - Repeater lp
- 8 All - Allroy Saves lp
- 9 Holy Rollers - As Is lp
- 10 Napalm Death - "Suffer The Children" 12"

JODI SHAPIRO

Top Ten Records Of 1990, With Numerous Omissions

Pavement - "Demolition Plot J-7" EP
My Bloody Valentine - Glider
Everything by the Screaming Trees and its members
Dr. Janet - "Ten Years Gone"/"Starry Eyes" 7"
Teenage Fan Club - A Catholic Education
Lush - Gala
Das Damen - Entertaining Friends (German import)
His Name Is Alive - Livonia
Everything by the Rollins Band and its members, especially "Fast Food For Thought" lp by Wartime
Sonic Youth - Goo

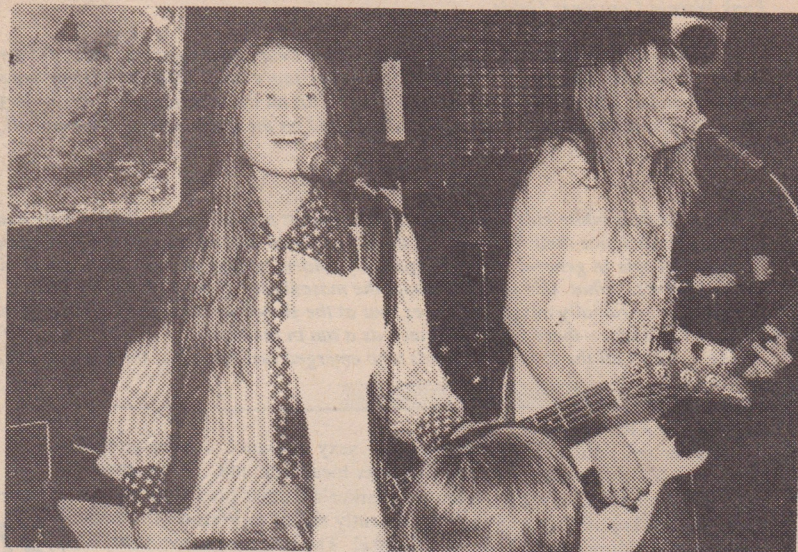
No room for: Prisonshake, The Orb, Soho, L7, Inspiral Carpets, Fugazi, Superchunk

JOHNNY PUKE
Top 10 Shows That I Can Remember, 1990

1. Ministry, Tampa FL
2. Rollins Band, Pensacola FL
3. Redd Kross, Charlotte NC
4. All Mighty Senators, Kill Devil Hills SC
5. Weirdos, St. Petersburg
6. Bob Mould, Duke University
7. Jody Grind, Columbia SC
8. Fugazi, Florence SC
9. Soul Asylum, Atlanta GA
- 10 Pale, Columbia SC

Top 5 Shows I Wish I Could Forget

Neighborhoods, Columbia SC
Run Westy Run, Columbia SC
Lemonheads, Columbia SC
Das Damen, Tampa FL
Soundgarden/Voivod, Tampa FL



REDD KROSS

MICHELE TAYLOR
Taylor's Top Ten Live Shows 1990

GWAR/Lunachicks - Marquee
Lush - CBGB
Laughing Hyenas/Cosmic Psychos - CBGB
Missing Foundation - Marquee
Meat Beat Manifesto - Pipeline
Jane's Addiction - Ritz
Foetus - Marquee
White Zombie - L'Amours
Skinny Puppy - Ritz
Ministry - Ritz

RODNEY LEIGHTON
Mainstream/Commercial Faves - 1990

Cher
Alannah Myles
Def Leppard
Heart
Roxette
Springsteen
Tina Turner
TU (sexy twin sisters from Toronto)
Peter Dinklage
Donnette Thayer

BEN WEASEL
Top 5 Punk Things 1990

1. The Queers - Grow Up lp
2. Blatz - Cheaper Than The Beer EP
3. DJ Lebowitz - live
4. Cometbus Fanzine
5. The Genitorturers!

Top 5 Shitty Punk Things 1990

1. Biafra just won't die!
2. Circle Jerks break up - then re-form!
3. Fugazi
4. Megan Leigh blows own brain out, eugologized on "A Current Affair"
5. Stiv is dead

No other feature that's ever appeared in *Jersey Beat* has involved as much research as this one. We attended literally dozens of shows, checking out bands, listening to demo tapes and records, taking notes. Before we get down to specifics, a few generalizations about the funk weenie trend. Not all these bands are alike, in fact there's quite a bit of diversity among them. What they have in common is that they all emerged on the scene during 1989 and all play some sort of funk/rock. And, well, a few other things...

Audience

The collegiate white kids who comprise the biggest segment of the funk weenie audience love to pack themselves in right next to the stage and dance their heads off. It should be noted that most of these people dance very badly. That may just be generally true of white people in general, but it's especially evident at funk shows. Girls are in higher than usual numbers but invariably dance by themselves. What this suggests about the masculinity of the funk weenie male is problematic. Some bands - especially *Lucy Brown* - draw racially mixed audiences, but at the shows we attended for some of the other bands - the *Spin Doctors* and *Bouncing Balls*, for instance - there wasn't so much as a tan in the house.

These aren't all the local funk bands who emerged last year, just the ones we got a chance to see and hear.

SWEET LIZARD ILLTET

Lead singer Emilio Zef's energetic and sexy presence dominates this band, which features more rap than any other local funk unit. White guys who rap? Sounds like a variation on Col. Parker's famous prediction about Elvis, which is probably why the Illtet recently signed to Warner Brothers without ever doing a record on an indie label. The first time I saw them - December of '89 - I was as convinced as anyone that they'd be the next big thing. A year later, after seeing them do the same set six or seven times, I'm not so sure. Take Zef out of the equation and you've got a rock band with a heavy drum sound that pads its sets with too many spacey jams and a guitar player who loses interest and fades out halfway into the show. The original set rocks your sox off on first listen, but the new songs they've introduced recently don't work at all.

Grade: B-



SPIN DOCTORS
Tie-Dyed Funk

Invasion Of The Generic Funk Weenies!

THE SELVES

Two years ago, The Selves played Velvet Underground-influenced new-wavey music in the same general vein as suburban nerd bands like *Spiral Jetty* and *The Feelies*. Then they went funk and suddenly became popular, although the new incarnation hasn't released a record yet. Songs are built around the double guitars and lead singer Mike Reilly's fondness for one-chord funk riffs, which get repetitious after a short while. The least funky-looking band on the scene.

Their latest 3-song demo features laid-back bar rock with funk influenced drum rhythms, but no pretensions of being anything more ethnic than a Hoboken college-rock band. Singer Mike Reilly never tries to rap or be his own version of "soulful" but rather settles into the smooth guitar pop as if it were an easy chair. All Hoboken guitars jangle as do the Selves', and the drums just pop it as the bass becomes a part of the whole, blending in without distracting or adding that white-funk ethnic pose. I wouldn't even call this white funk but I'd call it good.

Grade: B

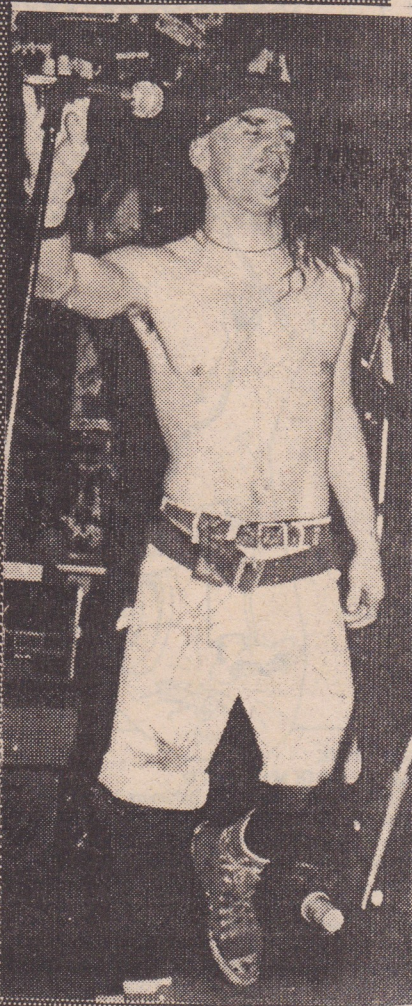
SPIN DOCTORS

It's no coincidence that their logo looks like the Grateful Dead's or that the Spin Doctors' audience favors tie-dye. If the Sweet Lizard Illtet are a tab of Ecstasy and the Selves are a six pack of Bud, these guys are hash brownies. Laid back and low key, their funk evolves from jazz and blues influences, with their excellent bass player the dominant instrument in their mix. Typical sets run two hours or more, with lots of ballads and long, jazzy songs. Lead singer Chris has a sweet puppy dog innocence and dances like one of the New Kids On The Block. This band's popularity defies description; although unsigned for most of 1989, they play out four or five times a week in a scene in which most bands feel lucky if they gig once a month. A debut EP should be out shortly.

Grade: C

by Johnny Puke

& Jim Testa



SWEET LIZARD ILLTET
High Energy Funk

SCOOBY GROOVE

The youngest funk band on the scene. We didn't get a chance to see them live. Their demo suggests a great sense of humor but a generic sense of funk rock, dominated by heavy rock guitars and vocals.
Grade: Incomplete

HEADS UP

One of John Bello's original signings to the now-defunct Hawker Records, this group got picked up by Roadracer, presumably as their token funk act. White guys who've graduated from the hardcore scene, Heads Up's debut album combines heavy riffs and rap without ever sounding particularly original or melodic. Hard to believe rap fans will ever buy into a band so totally lacking in a groove. Audience is mostly post-hardcore kids who come to slam dance. The band that inspired the term "generic funk weenie."
Grade: C-

LUCY BROWN

Killer live set. One of the few unsigned club bands in the Greater New York area without day jobs. But although they gig almost constantly, their set never seems perfunctory or lacks energy. Lead singer Gene Hawkins doesn't just grab his audience's attention, he commands it, putting the crowd through its paces like a nazi aerobics instructor. Everybody dances at a Lucy Brown show; you're afraid not to. And hey, it's a lot of fun. Music draws from hard rock and metal as much as funk; no rap, but lots of real singing and melody to the songs, which you can actually remember after the show. No record deal yet.

All in all, the songs on their demo are quite strong, although you'd think they'd pump up the bass more. On this recording, Scott Llewellyn's bass just plods along within a rock tempo - no thump, no bump - so the vocals and tinny drum mix soar above the instrumentation.

Grade: A

BOUNCING SOULS

Everything about this band speaks to these kids' slavish devotion to the Red Hot Chili Peppers, from their bare chests and funny haircuts to every note of their music. Unfortunately, the Red Hot Chili Peppers are not very good songwriters, and neither are the Bouncing Souls, which makes their set a little hard on the ears. Band draws from hardcore both for musical inspiration and its audience, which tends to be full of skateboard-toting teens and young collegiates with nose rings and tattoos. On the plus side, these guys love what they do so much that their energy and enthusiasm become infectious. No vinyl yet, although they are supposedly recording for Buy Our Records.

Grade: C



BOUNCING SOULS
Chili Pepper Funk



LIMBOMANIACS
Stinky Groove, CD/lp
In-Effect

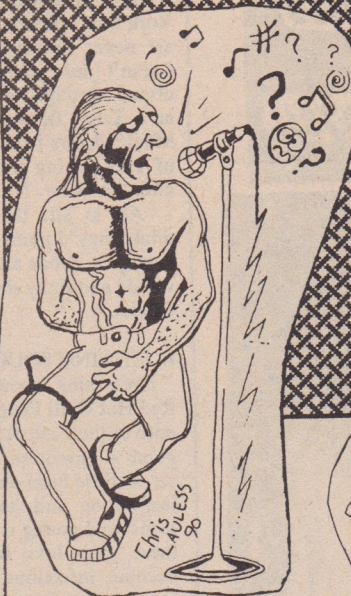
This reminds me of a little funk band I used to be familiar with about three years ago. The Limbomaniacs embody everything about this new funk wave. The music, played better by these guys than by most of their contemporaries, echoes that all-influential athletic L.A. quartet; to the band's credit, however, they keep the music end of things interesting by spicing it up with tasty samples, like Flavor Flav on "Shake It," William S. Burroughs on "Pavlov's Frothing Dog," and even queeny Little Richard on "Freestyle." It seems like Bootsy Collins is on every release you hear these days, and this is no exception. Juvenile rhymes creep in, though, just as with all the other white-boy wannabe posers. There's a song about feces ("Toilet's flooded" - guess with what?), a song about stuffing everything from a pear to a 2x4 into someone's honeypot, and a song about "Porno." As unoriginal as the concept may be, the Limbomaniacs' professional musicianship raises them above their own obsessions. "Butt Funkin'" (Bootsy's guest spot) and "Shake It" are so infectious that you can't help but shake that ass and the rest of the platter hip hops along as well. Although they might be imitative, they pull off rap vocals and P-Funk rhythms better than most, and you'll be dancing despite your better judgment. (JP)

Grade: A-

ALL MIGHTY SENATORS

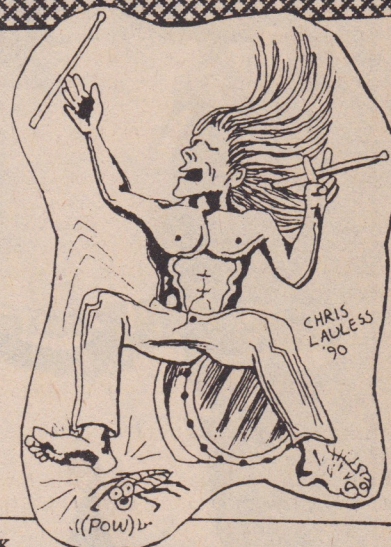
Merkin Records has released a 4-song 12" EP and a 7" of this Baltimore band, but neither one does justice to the group's live sound or energy. "Wink" on the 7" comes closest, with its high-energy polyrhythms, augmented by tight horn arrangements and funky bass. What's missing from the records but vital to the live sound is that hypnotic, almost tribal, swirling guitar sound, not unlike Fugazi's best grooves. And you can't talk about the All Mighty Senators without mentioning the visuals - a slide show accompanies the action, as the band performs in war paint and masks. You have to wonder why neither of the albums included so much as a band photo, lyrics, or liner notes that brought any of this out. Mostly, though, the All Mighty Senators thrive on the strength of their percussion section - a full drum kit played by the lead singer and a backup singer who uses timbales, Jamaican tin drums, bongos, wood blocks, cowbells, and synthesizers to juice up the beat. None of that has been captured on the vinyl unfortunately, which will surely disappoint fans of the live show who will want to recapture that primal, savage energy. (JP/JT)

Grade: B-



Funk

Weenies



MONKEYSPANK

Demons Flew Out Of My Mouth, lp
Merkin Records, PO Box 16292, Baltimore MD 21210

The opening cut of "Demons" is somewhat misleading. "Snake Juice" is a punkier song than most Monkeysbank material. It's the album's second track, "1000 Dollar Bracket," that tips off Monkeysbank's game plan - mixing tribal Fugazi-signatured rhythms with alternative post-funk rock. "Demons" grows weary trying a real "rap" vocal, which falls almost as flat as the chanted chorus of "Akio's Dad." "I Am Sam" and "Dr. Omar" blend 70's styled guitars with complicated drum rhythms, although "Dr. Omar" seems a bit overdone with the Peter Frampton break and canned horns. The final two tracks, "Hero" and "I Shake My Stick," are unlike the other pieces. "Hero" is a dark little screamer with little bass and a razzier guitar, while "I Shake My Stick" could be by Ministry. So what the hell is Monkeysbank up to? All in all, "Demons..." is a quirky little outing that shows a great diversity and an ability to combine those tribal riddims with post-modern instrumentations and a creative use of vocals. This may be the beginnings of a "Baltimore" sound as many of Monkeysbank's aural exercises remind me of Merkin labelmates The All Mighty Senators. (JP)

Grade: B-

ANTHROPHOBIA

While most whiteboy of the funk wave combine funk with 70's metal, Anthrophobia mix funky song structures with the heavier metal of the late 80's. The final tune, "Concussion," is an all-out metal attack with chugga chugga guitars and a more traditional vocal line. Throughout the demo, the NY/HC styled thud-drums beg to come out. Anthrophobia show a great promise and give us enough of something a bit different to keep us hoping for more. A great live show with terrific stage presence kicks major butt. (PO Box 6257, Wyomissing PA 19610) (JP/JT)

Grade: A

INTRO
M ZOO
ILUTET (Go Wylie)
STEP OFF
HER STORY
JAM
WITE BOIZ (Boo)
Ashes R.F.
WILL TO POWER (What up?)
M*G*T (Vib. Ah Pigeon)
POST WILLY

WEENTRO

I can't remember just when it was - at least five or six years ago, maybe longer - when I first ran across Ween. At that time, they were really just kids, 15 or 16 years old, running around in bare feet, making horrible noises, one of them with a guitar and the other one - the one in the silver swimmer's goggles - screaming his little head off, bass and drums erupting all around them from pre-recorded tapes. This was years before Milli had met Vanilli, before the New Kids lip-synched their way to superstardom. But there was nothing false about Ween. They introduced me to the cult of Boognish, to which I have slavishly devoted the rest of my life. In fact, the entire first eight years of publishing Jersey Beat have been nothing but prelude; Boognish made me do this zine so that when the time came - now, at the release of Ween's double-album "Satan Ween God: The Oneness" on Twin/Tone Records - there would be a vehicle for them to speak their truth to the world. Their real names are Mickey and Aaron - that is all I'm allowed to reveal. Mickey's entire family has been relocated somewhere in the rural Southwest by the Federal Witness Relocation Program, and Aaron reputedly owes Tony "Knuckles" Grossabugia, the Mafia don of Atlantic City, over \$65,000 in unpaid markers. But that is another story -- one that will probably never be told.

Here, at least, is the story we're allowed to tell. At last, my mission is over. Hail Boognish. Ween is God.

- Jim Testa

by Alex Swain

Ween, the virus, the strange spreadable disease that's taking over. I bet you're wondering exactly what a "ween" is. Ween are two suburban kids - Dean Ween on guitar, bass, and drums, Gene Ween on vocals - who play music. All music. Ween is everything. Ween is all. Phone interview with Dean Ween was conducted on December 8, 1990 at 3 a.m., eight hours before Ween departed for their second European tour.

Alex: What is a Ween? What does it mean?

Dean: We are Ween. We are fucking Ween. Our whole lifestyle is pretty fucking Ween, and our whole train of thought is pretty fucking Ween. I dunno...I just..I used to call Gene a fucking ween.

Alex: Is that short for "weenie?"

Dean: No, it's kind of like wang and peen.

Alex: Oh, it's sort of a slang word.

Dean: Yeah, but it goes much deeper. Like if you asked me to mow your lawn, I'd probably WEEN it up pretty fucking bad.

Alex: Now I understand. So tell me, when did you form?

Dean: It was about 1970, or so.

Alex: Basically, I figured that, either '70 or '71.

Dean: Yeah, it was '70.

Alex: So you're 32 years old now, how old is Gene?

Dean: Uh, Gene is 34.

Alex: Yeah, right. Was Ween considered a joke when you started?

Dean: No, no, no. It was never considered a joke. We shared a typing class together. I guess it was eighth grade. We were in Miss Slack's typing class at Solebury High School and that's where the apparition of BOOGNISH was first sighted. We were so moved by the sight - he was talking to us not in words, but he was communicating to us what had to be done. And later that day, we had no choice but to go throw it down on tape, which was what he had communicated to us.

(I put down the phone to light a cigarette)

Dean: I AM WEEN, ALEX.

Alex: Ok, so what were we saying?

Punk Is Dead, Ween Is God

The Jersey Beat Interview



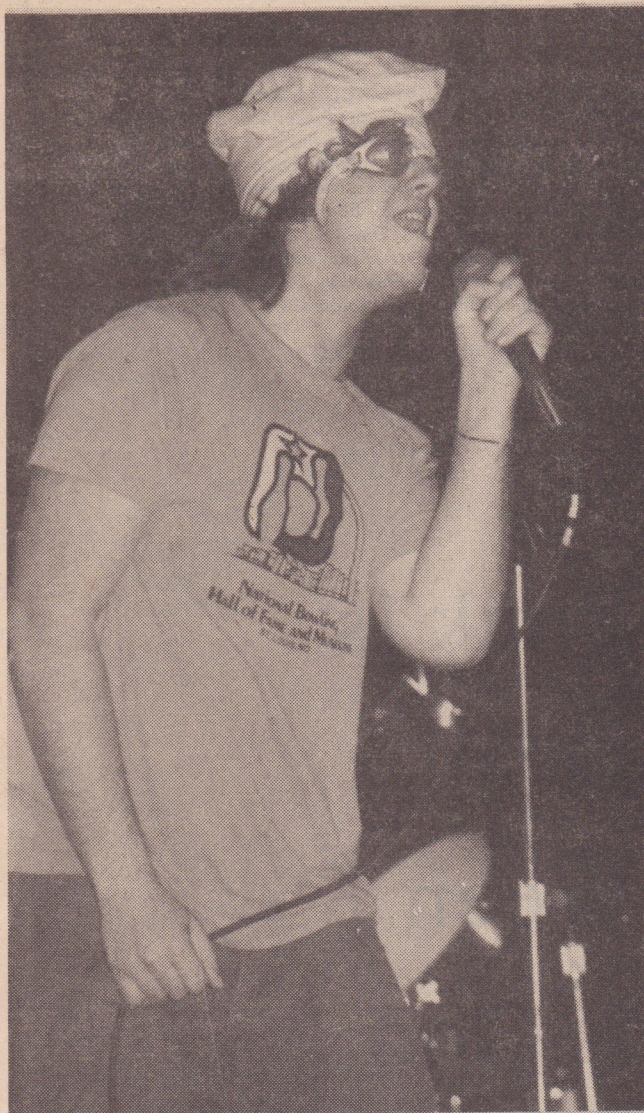


Photo by Jim Testa



WEEN

DEAN WEEN ON TOURING IN EUROPE:

'Over here, everybody and their fucking brother is in a band. So when you're American, and you go over there, show up with your guitar and your parka and your zits and your sneakers, and you're a scumbag and you know you're a fucking scumbag, and you know you're going to be making tacos when you get home, or pump gas or whatever... And um, you have so much fun. They really love what you're doing, it's really for real'

Dean: Uh, I forgot. Oh we were discussing BOOGNISH. Yeah, so, it was completely out of our hands what happened basically. Then Gene tried to leave the band. Two years after the first sighting and after that first session, BOOGNISH punished him so severely that he'll never try it again. It's not really up to us when it's time to quit or pack it in, because when He says it's time, then it's time.

Alex: Now that I know that, let me ask, what's the best thing to eat at El Taco Loco (the restaurant that Gene was once employed in).

Dean: I would say the beef and bean chimichangas are probably among the best. But other than that, I'd say the pollo esado taco but, uh, personally, I was there this evening and I got the cheese quesadilla with a side order of lettuce sautee and a large iced tea.

Alex: Supposedly you have millions of songs. Can you give us an actual count?

Dean: No, that would be impossible. We're kicking somewhere in between 2000 and 3000. Well, you see, it's a tricky thing, 'cause what we used to do is record entire cassettes in a day. We'd get together and we would, ummm, conceptualize the song titles, we'd come up with the titles. Classically, that's how we would write our songs and we would do entire cassettes, like nine to 15 songs, a day. Some days we would record a whole shitload of songs and then, right about now, we're doing a song or two every day. Then sometimes we don't record for two weeks. We have thousands of hours of tape, that's for sure. We know all the songs, too.

Alex: So last night you did your last show at City Gardens (in Trenton, NJ) before you move on to Europe, and you did a newer song called "Mocha." Tell me, what's that song about?

Dean: Like what it means to me? Mocha?

Alex: Yeah.

Dean: Mocha ties into the whole... fudge chocolate brownie theory that Ween believes in. It basically means that the chocolatey smell of fudgy stuff, like the show last night. When things are going really bad, mocha alerts people that sometimes the situation can get kind of fudgy.

Alex: Where does Ween live?

Dean: I won't give you our address but we live on a horse farm, out in beautiful Bucks County, PA, on the Delaware River. That's right, we live ON the river.

Alex: ON the river?

Dean: Yeah, and they're floating... (laughs) like a dock farm.

Alex: Kind of psychedelic.

Dean: Yeah, But we live on a horse farm, in New Hope, PA, and we live in a carriage house. It's a pod, we live in a pod.

Alex: And it's just you and Gene?

Dean: Yeah, just us.

Alex: So wtell me about "The Ween," when Sim Cain and Andrew (from the Rollins Band) play.

Dean: Yeah, The Ween. Well, those guys came crawling to us on their hands and knees screaming for a change...they were getting really tired of their scene and, uh, they asked us if they could try out for our band, and we told them we really don't like them, and later they came back begging and we tried them out, and basically, they sucked. So they're out of there, fuck their shit.

Alex: Well, it's just completely ridiculous to imagine a real bassist or drummer in Ween, that's just crazy.

Dean: Well in a situation such as ours, yeah, I mean, the BOOGNISH wouldn't have it. First of all, because they're just, uh... they've never experienced the common vision that brought Gene and I together. The COMMON VISION.

Alex: Like an aura where you and Gene reside, and no one else can see what you see.

Dean: They (Sim and Andrew) were pleading with us. They were begging us, totally begging to be with us. They even came up with these stupid names. Sim says he wants to be the Jolly Green Ween, and I said no fucking way. And Andrew tells me some shit about Ruptured Spleen Ween. I was like, "what the fuck? Pack up your shit and head for the door."

Alex: Well, can I be in Ween?

Dean: Like I said, it's up to BOOGNISH. It's completely out of our hands. It's not up to me to decide. Me and Gene are here to fulfill a need.

Alex: Tell me already, what the hell is BOOGNISH?

Dean: What IS the BOOGNISH? Well, the BOOGNISH is pictured on the front of our album cover, also known as the Ween coat-of-arms.

Alex: Comparing your first (extremely rare) album, and your brand new double album, there are extreme differences. Can you explain?

Dean: Well, the old record, the yellow record, was on Bird O'Prey Records, which was the label we were on at the beginning. Other bands on that label were Cleft Palate, The Scornflakes, Funkophobia, and other acts. They only put out about ten tape releases and only two on vinyl, Scornflakes and Ween. And at that point we were around for a long time. And the record is impossible to find. The only songs that we still play from it are "You Fucked Up," "I Drink A Lot," and "I Like You." And at that point, we were using a 4-track a lot more. We used to just use a 2-track and do a million overdubs. And that's how we did it. Anyone who has a copy of our first record must be a loyal fucking Weenhead.

Alex: So what about the new double album?

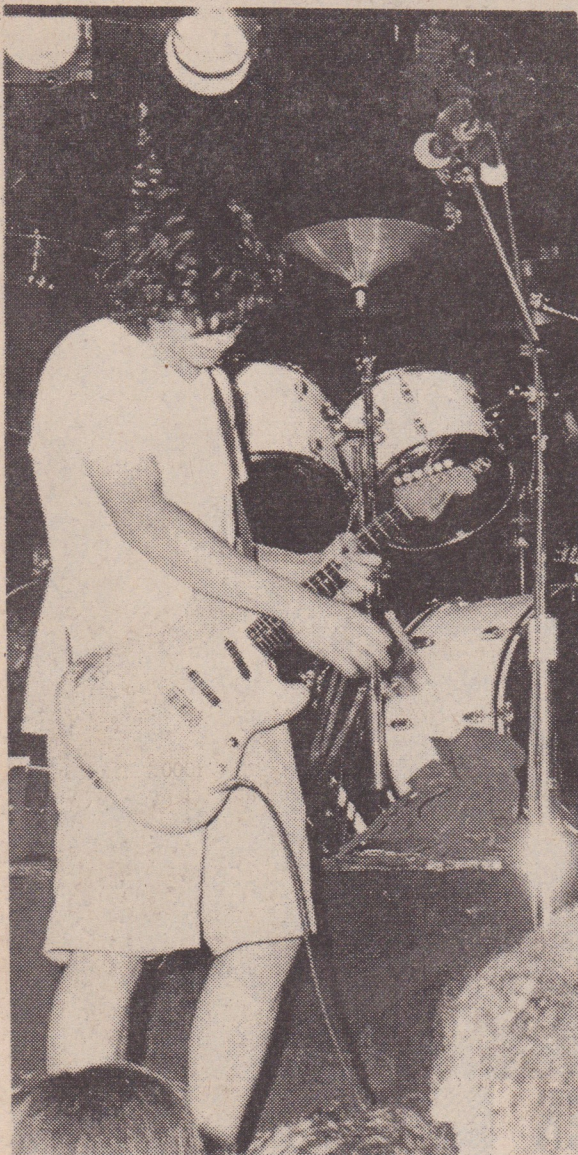


WEEN

WEENWADWEENWADWEENWADWEENWAD



Photo by Jim Testa



WEEN

Dean: Well, it was released in November, but we have so many fucking songs that by the time we put out any records, we're five more albums ahead of ourselves. So it's kind of a drag. I mean, I really like the Twin/Tone lp but by the time the next one comes out, I mean already this year we've recorded 6 album-length cassettes worth of material. If you were to count all the songs we don't have on the new lp, it'd take forever. I mean, we're touring in support of this record, and when you have a song like "I Got A Weasel" which is from 1985 or some shit... It just sucks. However we haven't changed our sound since we started. I mean, we're still Ween.

Alex: Well, it's really a good record. How many songs, 26?

Dean: Yeah, 26 songs.

Alex: In which you cover Prince, right?

Dean: Yeah, the only cover song. We don't really do cover songs.

Alex: Not so much cover, but you use styles from other bands...

Dean: Yeah, that's something I like about it. It sounds like there's 26 different lead singers on it. But there you go. That's the magic of Ween and Gene Ween.

Alex: And it's all him, right?

Dean: Well, mostly... I sing a little bit in a couple songs.

Alex: Is it true you're brothers?

Dean: In the spiritual sense, yes. But in real life, we're from different families.

Alex: I firmly believe the two of you are bonded and that's the only way you can truly create music.

Dean: Yeah, but... I dunno. But there's no posing.

Alex: How often do you do shows?

Dean: Well, usually not very often. I think unfortunately for Ween, we've been playing too much. Actually, you know, Alex, we've played I think 46 shows this year so far, which is a lot. And by the end of the year, I guess, well, we'll be playing every day starting when we go to Europe. We leave in 7 hours. Go to the airport, and then we have Monday, we do interviews. And then starting Tuesday we play every day til New Year's, and even after that I guess. We'll have played 60 or 70 shows or something. Ween have NEVER called for a gig, we've never even tried to get a gig.

Alex: So what's it going to be like in Europe? Do you have people going with you?

Dean: No, just Gene and myself, and our Belgium tour manager. Actually he's our European tour manager.

Alex: And does Twin/Tone provide you with everything?

Dean: No. Nope.

Alex: Did they pay your airfare?

Dean: Yes, they DID pay our airfare.

Alex: How about food?

Dean: Food we get every night from the clubs. They have to make us hot meals and provide us with lots of alcohol.

Alex: Speaking of alcohol, what are your feelings about drugs?

Dean: Alcohol being the most evil drug there is. Well, I don't have anything against anyone who doesn't do drugs or anything. It's a totally personal decision if you want to do that but... you know... we endorse our thing.

Alex: What do you endorse? What do you think people should do? What's the Ween Theory of Existence?

Dean: I think that if, I don't think you should take yourself too seriously, which may not be completely legitimate advise, y'know, coming from Ween. I would say just don't take yourself too seriously and eat lots of cheese.

Alex: Cheese? Why cheese?

Dean: Why? Why not? Cheese is really good.

Alex: Ok, since we're on the topic of food, what's your view on vegetables?

Dean: I don't know, you know what? If they keep them on life support I think that's just kind of fucking cruel because how do you know they wouldn't just rather be smothered with a pillow than uh... you know what I mean? I think it's pretty harsh shit, to tell you the truth. I think that people who are punished for mercy killings are unjustly imprisoned. I mean, I like vegetables just fine, as long as they aren't drooling all over my shirt. You know, snot running down their face. (Major laughs) But they really can't help it.

Alex: So what inspired the song "Nippy Wiffle"?

Dean: Well there you go. The song "Nippy Wiffle" was inspired from the title, and we fucking kicked it. The song was totally nippy wiffle. It seeps wippy niffle from every pore. (unintelligible comments on the tape, then...) ... "Bumblebee." You have our record, right? Put on "Bumblebee." That groove is so bee-like. It's so fucking, like the most bee thing. I mean, you hear that you just imagine you're stepping on a fucking hornet's nest and it's just swarming.

Alex: And you're just waiting to be engulfed by bees.

Dean: Yeah, and it's going wawahohoooh (imitates bee noises)

Alex: Is that why you use a wah-wah pedal?

Dean: Well no, it's just...well, YEAH, but no. It's just bee-like. The whole thing bee-like. We don't read into it all that deep, we just say, "wow, let's do a song called Bumblebee." Well, actually, to tell you the truth, Gene was weed-eating his father's lawn when we were 14 or 15 and he mowed right into a hornet's nest. And he got all these welts all over his back from the fucking stings. That's what Ween is. That's why I said there's no posing about it.

Alex: What's the audience like in Europe? Do you have a following?

Dean: It's a lot different, but not necessarily better. It's different because Europeans don't get crazy, really. They have more respect. First of all, you don't play in bars, number one point. I mean, yeah, they serve alcohol at the bars, but usually it's like a really nice place. I mean you're not playing in a fucking hole. There's like a coffee shop and a restaurant, and it's like a community center, and it's all subsidized by the government. At least Holland is like that, and I'm sure Belgium is the same way. And when the people come to your shows, they don't talk when you play, they listen to every note, and respect it... When you're playing a quiet song, and you don't hear fucking beer bottles clanking and that shit, it kind of makes you feel like you're under glass or something. Like you're on display. But it's cool, it's a compliment, really.

WEEN



TOP TEN WEEN SONG TITLES

1. Nippy Wiffle
2. Everyone's A Lesbian
3. Ingrown Mayo
4. The Refrigerator That Wouldn't Close
5. Shnagenhausen
6. We Seen Ween Bean
7. Marble Tulip Juicy Tree
8. Wanton Nougat
9. Big Baboons
10. Boognish



What we do, which I think is a very American thing, I mean, we are two young American people. And they've never fucking heard of an "El Camino" over there. They don't have a fucking clue. And that song, it's not so much about the car but the plush velous motherfucking scumbags that usually drive them. And over there, they're just lost. But over here, Americans have pretty much seen it all. I mean, who hasn't shown their dick on stage or thrown up or whatever? Some people take it a little further than others, but...um, when you go over there, it's kind of strange.

And another thing, over there, if you're an artist, you're a fucking artist and that's what you do. And that's your thing. And it's kind of serious. But don't get me wrong, they have a LOT of shitty music. And over here, everybody and their fucking brother is in a band. So when you're American, and you go over there, show up with your guitar and your parka and your zits and your sneakers, and you're a scumbag and you know you're a fucking scumbag, and you know you're going to be making tacos when you get home, or pump gas or whatever... And um, you have so much fun. They really love what you're doing, it's really for real.

Alex: I think they have a lot of respect for Americans.

Dean: Yeah, they have tremendous respect but also, finishing up this whole question, it's a lot cooler to be big in America. I mean, if you can get a bunch of drunk Americans and you're just an opening band, I mean that's a much more critical audience than a bunch of Europeans. If I were to go on stage in Holland all drunk, throwing up on stage, and just be totally out of fucking control, they might like that, 'cause they don't get a lot of that. We were out there earlier, and there was this Dutch rap music shit, and they're going "ya ya man, come to party, man," "turn up the bass, man." I mean, what the fuck? That's bullshit. Cut that stupid shit out.

Alex: So you play guitar, Gene does vocals and backup guitar. But you also play drums and bass on tape, then play it back again and sync with it when you do shows. How do you manage that?

Dean: It's pure magic. Magic is a very key word to Ween. We were going to call our new album "Capture The Magic" and have a picture of Gene Ween on the cover.

Alex: So what kind of music does Ween model itself after?

Dean: None, really. I mean, like you're in a band and someone asks you what kind of music you like. And you say, R.E.M., The Byrds, whatever. Right then and there I'll know not to check you out, because I can just go listen to R.E.M. instead of you. And that's just the way I feel. I'm really critical of the music I listen to. I buy Prince records, Public Enemy records, and I buy Metallica records every year or so when they come out. But that's it. There's not much metal or anything that I'm really checking out. I mean, music is dead. Rap was like a slap in the face, but now it's been abused. Now you've got MC Hammer, which is a watered down corporate interpretation with soft relevance. It's so inevitable. And punk rock is dead, and anyone who says punk rock isn't dead is a fucking fool. It's dead. And I was really into punk rock when I was 13 or 14, it was a really great thing. And right now there's nothing for me. I have to say we're just Classic Rock. Not that we like Classic Rock, but people always want us to describe what it is we do. And alternative music is the worst shit in the world, and we sometimes get labeled as that.

Alex: So in essence, you just don't want to be labeled as anything except Ween.

Dean: Exactly. And Twin/Tone Records knows not to try. File under WEEN.

Pugwash, Nova Scotia - As I sit here in 30-40 degree temperatures wondering if I should envy the folk in NY/NJ, I shall try and put together the first of what I hope to be many editions of "Cassette Culture." Everything reviewed here is cassettes-only, so don't bother looking for lp's or CD's, eh?

ERIC HARRISON'S CRASH CHORUS - Anyone Can Fill Your Shoes (Eric Harris, 3 Plymouth Lane, East Brunswick NJ 08816) A 10-song tape of originals. Very good stuff, somewhat to my liking. Jim would hate it. Pure pop of a style made popular by Dylan. A lot of different words in each song, some them the sort Mike Gunderloy uses. All songs tell a story; mostly about life and its travails. The guy can sing, you'll hear him on the radio one day.

THE LAURELS - Neck (PO Box 29447, Providence RI 02909) 14 pieces from this two-year old trio. They seem like a punk band who want to try and go mainstream. My suggestion: Get a tad rougher and be happy as a punk band. Or else, learn to sing instead of shouting, and practice playing your instruments.

BUBBA ZANETTI - 4 song demo (40 Clinton Street, #1B, New York NY 10002) Why do people use a 60 minute tape for 4 songs? Hard-driving punk. Vocals are basically screamed. Listen close and they can be understood. Drums are dominant. (Rodney)

CHILDREN - Arms To Hold You, 6 song cassette (PO Box 1411, Sioux Falls SD 57101) Soft rock with a straight edge focus and a bit of a Christian slant. Five young men with potential. Enjoyable stuff. "I Stood Alone" is one of the best songs I've heard in some time. "Still Running" is also very good. Recommended.

ONLY LIVING WITNESS - 4 song demo (PO Box 1090, Hudson NH 03051) A punk band verging on scum. Vocals are shouted as opposed to sung. Good drummer, knows three positions. Lovers of punk should like this one.

ADAM ROBERTS - Manhattan Beach 6 song cassette (1204 Ave U/Box 1163, Brooklyn NY 11229) This one is very close to country & western, with a tinge of pop. All good songs. "Will You Love Me Tomorrow" stood out. A keeper for me.

ST JOHNNY - 7 song demo (PO Box 65, New Britain CT 06050) A bit of a mix - punk, experimental, rock, and semi-metal. Sort of harsh. Some polish would improve this band immensely. The drums are somewhat dominant.

CASSETTE CULTURE by Rodney Leighton

ULTRAISM - A Demonstration, 10 song cassette (RD3 204 Point Island Spring Rd, Freehold NJ 07728) A quartet of kids trying out their wings. A couple of the numbers are from live shows. Nothing very exciting. Dedicated to moms everywhere - but NOT Tipper-Gore. Experimental punk, if there is such a thing.

WALKING DISTANCE - 5 song demo (Scott Munroe, PO Box 375, Fairfield CT 06430) Two young men with guitars and drums, screaming at the world and life in general. Unhappy with life, these boys. Pure punk. Is that an oxymoron?

MJB 90 - Dead Braincells Society (Chris Bowman, PO Box 316 Cooper Station, New York NY 10276) Cool liner notes and flyer with this, 16 songs, one of which is fucked on the copy I got. Homegrown, home-produced, somewhat experimental pop tinged with rock and funk. The guy does virtually everything himself - vocals, instruments, recording - and tries a variety of styles and subjects. A touch rough but worth a listen.

In Your Face With LUCY BROWN

The punk scene sorta

got corrupted by

the punky funk

thing...

The Band:

Gene Hawkins - vocals

Scott Llewellyn - bass

Luis Peraza - guitar

Chris Neuberg - drums

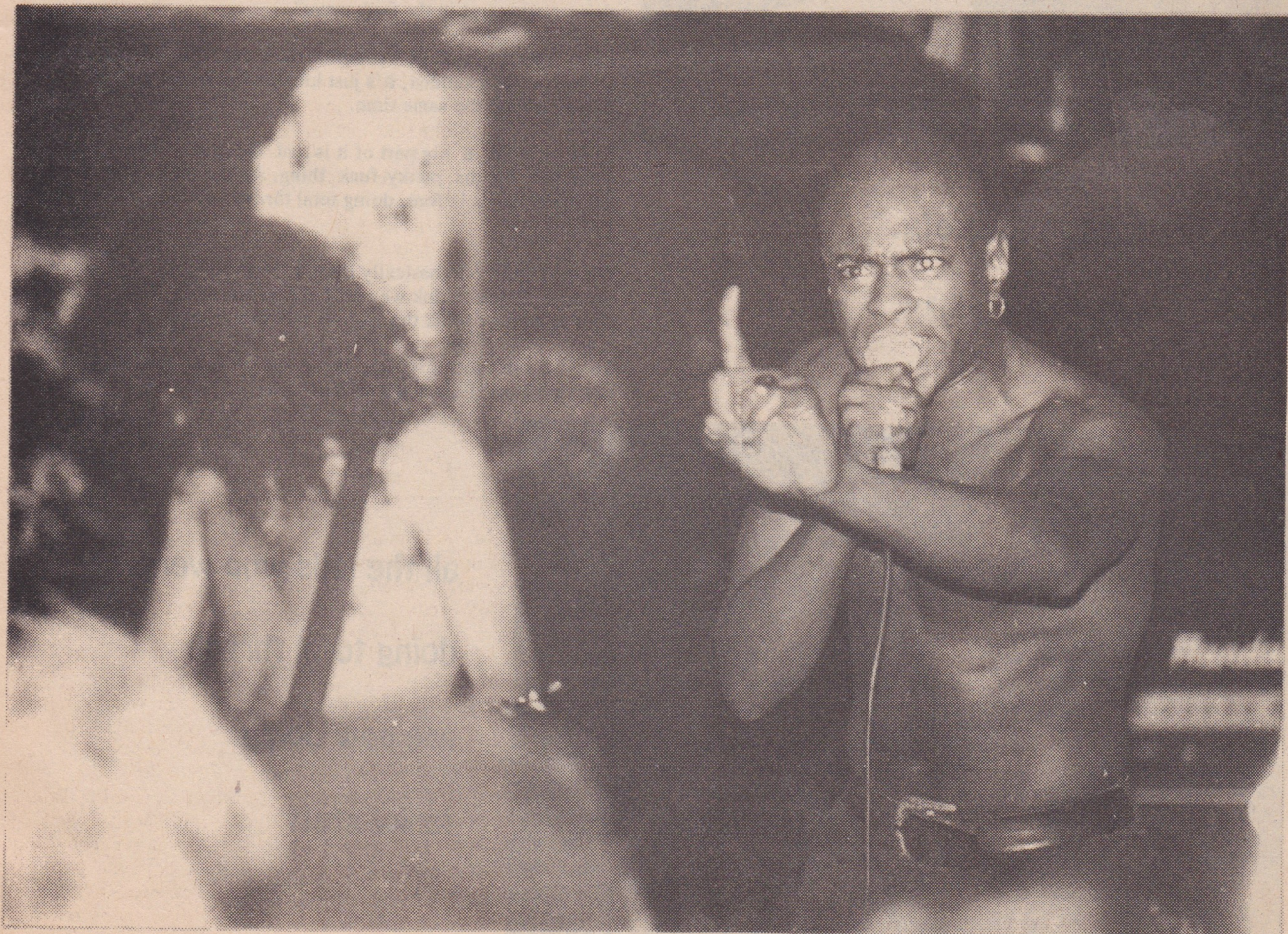
photos by Jim Testa

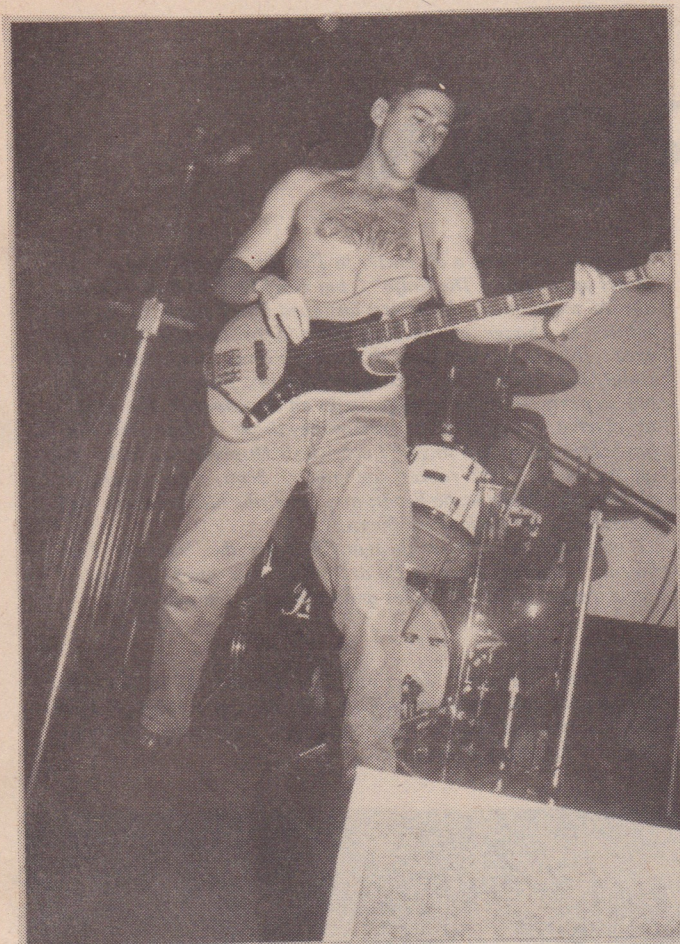
Lucy Brown was a character in The Threepenny Opera - she shows up in "Mack The Knife" - but nowadays the name's more like to mean one of the hottest unsigned (as of press time, and subject to change any second) bands in the Greater New York area. This is an easy band to describe: Funk, soul, hard rock, sweat and lots of crazy fans at every show, from yuppie dudes out to party hearty to teenage punks on skateboards. The band's as diverse a bunch as the crowds they draw - Gene, the black linebacker-sized lead singer; Luis, who's Hispanic and looks like an Avenue A punk rocker, on guitar; Scott, who should be playing bass in Agnostic Front; and Gene, the blond goliath with the Sub-Pop length hair on drums.

I originally went to see them at CBGB for the "Generic Funk Weenie" feature, figuring I'd debunk another myth. Instead, I came away a believer. Ladies and gentlemen, Lucy Brown...

- Jim T.

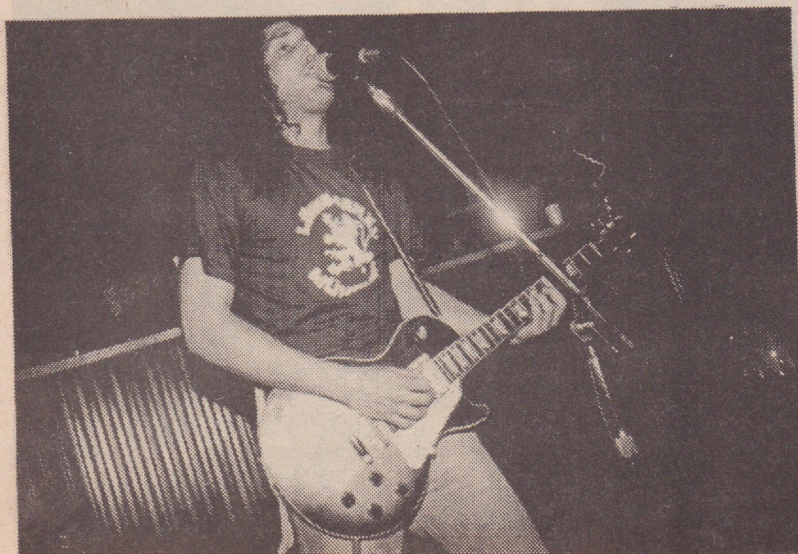
The scene: Tumulty's Tavern in New Brunswick, in between soundcheck and the show at Club 375, the band wolfing down burgers and salads, me trying to think of interesting questions, since I'd forgotten all my notes...





We hear a lot of...

"Where's Lucy?"



Q: So you started out in, where, Washington?

Gene: Yes, Washington, DC.

Q: And you decided to move to New Jersey?

Gene: Yes, because it was cheap.

Luis: And it's close to New York.

Scott: We didn't want to wake up in the city where no one ever sleeps, so instead we wake up in Elizabeth, with people getting shot next door to us.

Luis: We were actually following Bon Jovi, it was sort of a quest.

Q: How long were you together in Washington?

Gene: About six months. Altogether the band's been together about a year and a half.

Scott: When we first got together, me and Luis were just finishing school, Gene was getting sick of his old band, and Chris was the hard one to pry out of D.C. but we managed to do it.

Luis: Because we wanted to do more than just hang around and wait for something to happen.

Gene: Our first show was in July, 1989.

Q: I know you're aware of the fact that, oh, 18 months ago, there weren't that many bands around that sounded like you, and now they seem to be crawling out of the woodwork. Do you worry about getting lost in the funk wave?

Luis: You can't help but notice there are a lot of funk bands around all of a sudden, it's just kind of weird that we sort of got started around the same time.

Scott: I think a big part of it is that the punk scene sorta got corrupted by the punky-funk thing. All the kids who were in hardcore bands before, doing total thrash, are now doing funky stuff.

Gene: Yeah, but basically I don't think we really fit into that, because I don't think we really are a funk band. There's a funk core to it, but I think the way we interpret it is different.

Scott: Yeah, for instance, Gene doesn't rap. And it isn't just rhythm guitar, Luis plays a lot of leads.

all the kids who were
doing total thrash
are now doing
funky stuff'

Lucy Brown

[conversation stops while band flirts with waitress and tries to get her to come to show...]

Luis: We have a lot more of a blues, soul, metal thing going. I can't think of any other bands who are doing it the way we are, who SING instead of rap.

Scott: I don't want to step on anybody's toes, because a lot of these bands I like, but someone like the Limbomaniacs, say... There's tons of bands who have, like, a funky groove in E, with a lot of slap bass, and then they rap over it. I think that's another reason why this music is becoming popular, because everybody likes rap now too.

Q: I guess it's just a style whose time has arrived.

Scott: Right, now every kid's got his baseball cap on backwards, and his Air Nikes...

Q: Well, one big thing that sets you apart is that every band I know in New York cries that it's impossible to get a gig here, and you guys seem to play out all the time.

Luis: Well, that first one wasn't easy.

Gene: Yeah, it was really difficult.

Luis: Those first few gigs were real hard. We got lucky. We played a Kenny's Castaways show, there were like ten people there. We made seven dollars.

Scott: You have to face it, your first few shows, you're not going to get paid and there's going to be no one there.

Luis: Yeah, but it's not easy to get a show. In D.C., if you push hard enough, you can get a show.

Scott: Well, you can play open mike night and play for free pretty easy. Once you get in the door, it's easier.

Luis: See, we play all over, from down in D.C. up to...

Scott: And we play metal clubs too. We play CBGB and the next night we might play the Metal Church at the Limelight. Or we might play a hardcore matinee and then play a club gig the next night.

Luis: It's weird, we've always played the Limelight on Sunday nights [heavy metal night]

Scott: And it's huge. We play for like 1500 people when we play there.

Q: You seem to draw a really diverse audience, in terms of age, sex, and color.

Scott: We like that.

Q: And that's not due to anything you can really do, it's just who shows up.

Scott: Yeah, but look at the band.

Luis: But it's also the gigs we pursue. We'd actively pursue a Fugazi gig just as quickly as something like a show with Alice In Chains or some metal show.

Gene: Or Dirty Looks. We pursued our Dirty Looks show.

Luis: If it draws a big crowd, we'll play it at the Cat Club, because it's exposure. And it works, because of lot of those heavy metal guys who only like MTV glam bands are into us now.

Gene: After one show, this guy comes up to me wearing spandex and makeup and says, "Hey man, I wear spandex AND makeup but I love you guys!"

Q: Are you booking yourselves?

All: Yeah.

Q: And managing yourselves?

Gene: No. We're with Concrete Management.

Q: And how about a recording deal.

Gene: Everything's in the works, people are talking... Nothing definite that we can really discuss yet.

Q: Ok, no specifics, let's just talk strategy. Are you looking to get signed to a major right away, or would you consider doing a couple of records on an indie first?

Gene: It all depends.

Scott: Philosophically, we are not opposed to major labels. I'm not.

Gene: But also philosophically, we are not opposed to indie labels.

Luis: What we want is something that's presented to us that would seem like the ideal package. I wouldn't mind being with an indie as long as they could give us the right tour support. Because I want to be on the road and I want to be doing this.

Gene: And I want to be comfortable.

Scott: Whereas I wouldn't mind being on a major if they actually believe in you, as opposed to where they're going to try and groom you into something acceptable.

Luis: We want to be taken the way we are. Which I think is good.

Scott: Well, I like to wear wigs and heels on stage, but that's where I draw the line.

Q: The problem I see with doing your first record on a major is that it's a lot more pressure to make it or break it right away. Whereas an indie is more likely to invest some time in you. On a major, if the record doesn't sell and you took a big advance, you're enormously in debt with nowhere to go.

Gene: We wouldn't take a big advance.

Scott: All we want is enough money to make a good record. I don't want to be limited to like only three days in the studio or something.

Luis: I wouldn't want them to say, here's a lot of money so you can go spend it on yourself.

Scott: From what I hear, that doesn't happen too much anymore anyway. Not to bands like us.

Q: Are you working day jobs?

Yo, Sucker!

I Said, DANCE!!!

And I Mean

NOW!!!

All: No!

Scott (to Gene): How long has it been since you've had a job?

Gene: Two years.

(laughter)

Gene: We have a publishing company who gave us a very generous advance, so that's kept us going.

Luis: It keeps our rent paid and it lets us put gas in the van so we can play out of town all the time.

Scott: We play a lot too. We play all the way down to Richmond and up to Rhode Island. We've been to Providence a few times... And we should say this too, we'll play with ANYONE. We've played with Faith No More...

Gene: M.O.D., Lenny Kravitz...

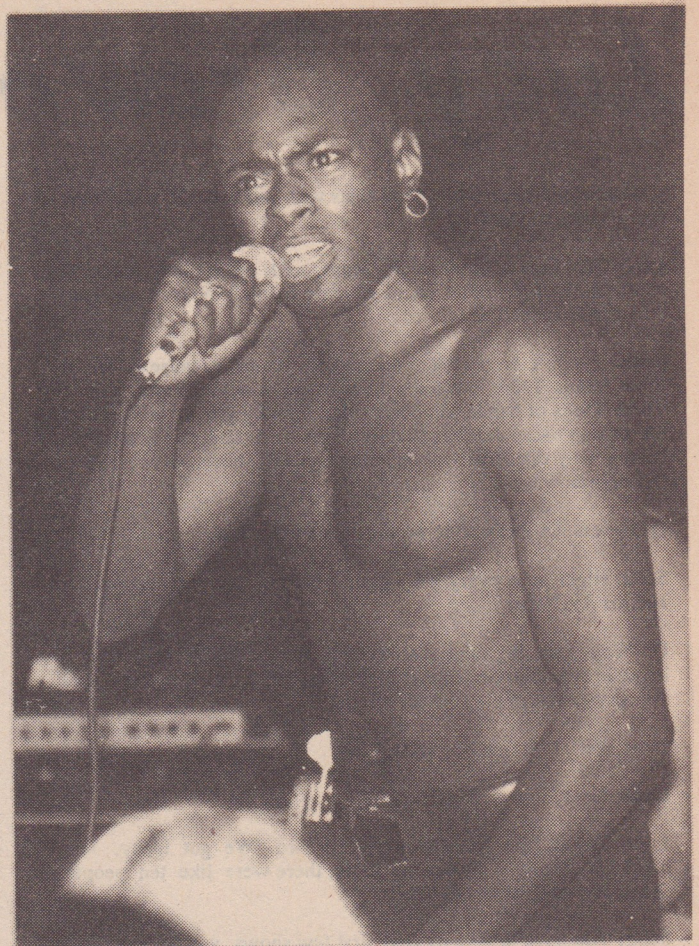
Luis: E.U., Troublefunk, Urban Dance Squad...

Gene: We didn't actually play with Lenny Kravitz, we had to cancel it, but we were supposed to.

Luis: If you look at the kinds of bands we play with, you'd never know what kind of band we are, especially from the name.

Gene: Yeah, we hear a lot of... "Where's Lucy?"

Q: Has there been anybody's audience who just didn't get it?



Gene: Yes. Bone' Daddies. It was all Yuppies, BMW's in the parking lot. At that time we were doing some really hard stuff too.

Luis: For some reason, the Bone Daddies at The Bayou drew a really older crowd.

Gene: How about the famous Red Spot show?

Luis: Well, there was four people there.

Gene: And all they wanted to hear was house music. It was House Night and they did no advertising for us, so it was... horrible. All these people staring at us going "Let the music take control, let the music take control, let the music take control..."

Q: Any other secrets to your success?

Gene: Well, we all like a lot of different stuff. Some of my favorite records are Joni Mitchell, Richie Havens, Judy Collins... you know?

Q: The other band you were in was a reggae band, wasn't it?

Gene: Yeah, reggae/ska.

Q: That scene died in New York all of a sudden.

Gene: Well, when the biggest place you play is CBGB and the booker says "no more ska," it kind of ruins the scene, because there were so many fights and so much violence.

Scott: We played the last hardcore matinee at CB's too.

Gene: We played the show after the C.O.C. show, that's where all the trouble was because there were so many fights.

Q: Lately the bookings at CB's make no sense. Like the night I saw you there, there were seven bands on the bill.

Gene: That really pissed us off.

Luis: We didn't get a soundcheck or anything because of that.

Scott: Head's Up didn't go on until about 2:30 in the morning that night.

Luis: We've played at the front end of those and at the back end too when we first got up here also.

Q: And the first two bands play to no one and the last two bands play to no one.

Luis: Exactly.

Q: Is the demo the only thing you've recorded so far?

Scott: Which demo do you have? The new one? That's the third one.

Gene: It's probably the best sounding one.

Luis: The first two were six songs done in five hours.

Scott: We did them basically just for ourselves but they wound up being usable, so we used them for, like, a year. Honestly the first demo we did was recorded within three weeks of when we got together.

Luis: We did it just so we could hear ourselves and have something to give to clubs, but we wound up giving it to the record companies too. (laughs)

Q: You're the kind of band that really seems to feed off the energy of an audience, in fact Gene gets belligerent if the audience isn't dancing. What was it like in a studio playing for a few people behind a glass wall? Did you have trouble getting it going?

Luis: Just the opposite. I get excited in the studio. We almost overdid it.

Scott: We did overdo it. All those songs are way too fast.

Q: You guys all live together?

All: Yeah.

Q: Like the Monkees.

Luis: A LOT like the Monkees, actually, you'd be surprised.

Q: The first thing when you get signed is separate apartments?

Luis: Probably not, because the first thing when we get signed is, we go on the road.

Scott: Basically, we are going to HAVE to live with each other for like a good year.

Q: At least you'll be used to each other.

Scott: That's a good point.

Luis: It's not going to be a rude awakening to find out, like, wow, you're really an asshole. We all know what to expect from each other anyway.

Scott: We basically spent June on tour, because I remember we were playing three or four nights a week every week. And we drove the whole time, we were staying in the van...

Gene: We had a good time.

Luis: I like doing that. I like it better than school.

Scott: I liked school pretty much. School was good.

Luis: Well, go get a grad degree in something.

Scott: I could never go to grad school.

Luis: I'm going,

Gene: I'm going to be a club promoter.

Scott: Yeah, I'll be an A&R guy or something.

Q: Well, it'd be good to have something to fall back on, rock 'n roll is a crazy business.

Gene: I've thought about that some, way down the line. Thirty years from now or something.

Q: You have to be an asshole to book a club.

Gene: Well, I'm sure these guys will vouch for me.

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by Jim Testa

I've known Frank Phobia for quite a while, and even got to interview him when we did a cover story on his band Orifice a few issues ago. But Orifice was just a side project; for the better part of the '80's, Frank's first love has been Anthrophobia (originally the unpronounceable Anthrophobia, meaning "fear of people"). Today, when generic funk weenies crawl out from under the woodwork like cockroaches attacking a Twinkie, Anthrophobia remains a true original. Unfortunately, they're also fairly disorganized, and located way out in the middle of the boondocks in Pennsylvania, and took so long to answer our mail interview that I wound up losing the questions. So, as best we can, here's our reconstructed interview with Anthrophobia...

ANTHROPHOBIA

Present were Frank, Kelly, and Dickie. Mig showed up at the end.

Question 1 had something to do with the many and varied personnel who have occupied the position of percussionist with the band, I think. And then they were supposed to introduce the band.

Frank: Dickie Phobia is an amazing drummer. He joined in March, '90, two weeks before we played a huge, sold out show with The Ramones. He kinda saved us. We were about to call it quits. Our drummer #12 quit without warning and Dickie wanted to play. He was a friend and fan, he knew 90% of the set after one practice. Dickie also plays drums for a killer HC band, Irandarú. Dickie is also great at helping arrange songs, and I didn't even say all those nice things because he's sitting right next to me. Kelly Phobia is a bass monster. He is way into the funk-slap-boom-boom-pop thing for years. He's our 2nd bassist, but he's been in it, putting up with my shit, since April, 1986, so it seems like forever. Trying to imagine he's still my friend after all these ups and downs is rather amazing. Kelly owns a great snowboard/skateboard store called Shredquarters. We took Mike Patton from Faith No More there last March. He could only afford a pair of cool pants and some small stuff back then. I guess he could buy the place by now. He's actually a great, fun guy...not Kelly, Mike I mean. Just kidding. Mig Phobia is my pal since 6th Grade. When he plays guitar, you'd expect to see some 6 foot, 90 pound, big hairdo slick dude-man. Instead you get our Miggy. He's great, his last teacher was Greg Howe (Shrapnel Records). He has a great feel for the instrument. He's our 3rd guitarist. He joined in Oct. '87. A long time ago. As for me, Frank Phobia, I try to sing and talk and yell and entertain. I write all the words, I do most of the bookings, etc. I played guitar in 'phobia for the first couple years, but our style changed a lot and I needed to concentrate on singing. Mig doesn't need any sloppy backup. I formed this band in October, '84. I'm the only one left from those days. This will probably be the last lineup.

Kelly: Yeah, if this one doesn't last, that's it.

Question 2 had to do with the band's onetime connection to Philadelphia's punk scene and also something about one of the more famous alumni of the band. And after six years, what keeps this thing alive?

Frank: To make a long, sad, heartbreaking soap opera short... Kelly, Mig and I grew up in Reading, PA. We all moved to Philadelphia to go to college. Mig and Kel went to Temple, I went to Philadelphia College of Art (now University Of The Arts), we all graduated and moved back to Reading. We all pretty much had our fill of that shitty armpit of a city. Famous alumni? Gee, Jim, who could you possibly mean?



FRANK



ANTHROPHOBIA



Dickie, Mig, Kelly & Frank

Anthrophobia photos by Angelo

Kelly: Of course you mean Chuck Treece. He played drums for us for a year or so. he recorded our "88" demo with us. Then we had that trip to California and that was it for him. Chuck is an awesome musician.

Frank: When he was in, he had a very positive influence on us. Then it got all fucked in California in January, '89. (We went on tour with his band McRad. Whatever happened, happened. It's over. No need to make it ugly. I wish him luck, he is very talented.)

Kelly: Now he's on SK8TV (on Nickolodeon).

Frank: What keeps me going? I have this drive in me to get us signed and let tons of people hear us. This band has been a big part of me in the last six years. I know we've been kicked when we're down, had a lot of bad things happen to us, a lot of trouble with lineups, etc, but I believe in us. I believe we are a really good band. I love this band, they are all my friends and I think a lot of good, positive stuff will happen. The last year since Dickie has been in, has been our best year ever. I seriously think we keep getting better and we are better now than we've ever been.

Question 3 tried to trap the band into admitting that they might get lost in the shuffle of the Generic Funk Weenie invasion...

Kelly: Obviously it's our bass/drum connection. It's what I like to do, I like to play funk.

Dickie: He can't help it if he's white so that label "white funk band" sucks. White, black, green, who cares? We're all people.

Kelly: Lost in the shuffle? Hum... If that's what's gotta happen to get us signed... fuck it. I'd love to get lost in the shuffle with a record out rather than not be shuffled around without a record deal!

Frank: We've been putting funk stuff in our music for over three years, so we could get lost in the shuffle with dignity. But we aren't all funk, we're just as much a metal, rock, punk band as we are a funk band. I don't think we're ripping off any one band, maybe influenced by 2,000 different bands. But we didn't jump on any bandwagon in 1990.

Question 4 was about the Philadelphia punk scene, like, "name some good bands from there" or something like that.

Frank: Ruin, Pagan Babies, Orifice, Sink Manhattan, Electric Love Muffin, Trained Attack Dogs, Homo Picnic, Serial Killers, Legitimate Reason, Trilogy Of Terror, McRad, She Males, Das Yahoos, Brickhouse, Tons Of Nuns, EAB, Big Thing... all of those Philly bands are dead and gone. Those bands all kicked ass when I lived there. Now it's a bunch of bands I haven't seen yet or who haven't impressed me at all. People like Carol Schutzbank and Chuck Meehan deserve a lot of credit... Philly sucks for the most part. I haven't seen a new band I liked in ages. I like F.O.D., Dr Bombay, Formula 43, Scram, Scab Cadillac, More Fiends...that's about it. There haven't been any medium-sized all ages shows in the last year or two.

Dickie: Formula 43 blew me away, live!

Kelly: Just big, huge shows or tiny ones, nothing in between. (Club) Revival sucks. It's sad, we've only played one show in Philly since March.

Frank: Trends? How about every HC band in the area sounding like a NYC/HC or a D.C. ripoff? I've noticed less originality but better musicianship and more business sense. Oh yeah, I forgot Zoo Stitches. I loved them but they broke up too.

Question 5 was: So what's Reading, your hometown, like?

Frank: Reading has a cool scene. Actually, a lot of bored kids with money for shows.

Kelly: Anthrophobia rules in Reading. Yeah us, Irandar, and Torment.

Dickie: Y'know, big fish, small pond kind of deal.

Question 6 was dumb so we'll skip it, and nobody liked Question 7, but it was about how there used to be a "Sound Of Philadelphia" but the city doesn't seem to have any musical identity anymore, and how does Anthrophobia fit into that state of affairs?

Frank: Aw, come on, Philly has the almighty Schooly D, Dead Milkmen, Cinderella, Pretty Poison, Hooters, Tommy Conwell, Patty Labelle. Man, you're right, Philly doesn't have a sound?!? Scene? What scene? You got metalheads in the North East, scum rock drunks in West Philly, and out of town college kids. I really hate Philadelphia now that I think of it. I miss my friends a lot that still live there but that's about it... As far as where do I see us fitting in, I bet most people probably think we broke up since we moved out of the city (Reading is 60 miles west of Philly). I don't think we fit in. We aren't scum rock, we're not metal looking enough, and we take showers, so I really don't know. Man, I've really been ragging on Philly. Um...something positive... Khyber Pass and J.C. Dobbs and Fienze Tavern are all tiny clubs but have some good shows. The cabarets have some good bands. Earwig Inc with Carol Schutzbank and Karen McVicker and Ann Hendrix is great for trying soooo hard.

Question 8 was that old standby, how do you write your songs?

Mig: We pretty much write songs together now. Me and Frank used to write stuff separately and then let Kelly and the drummer throw in ideas.

Kelly: We just jam at practice and come up with stuff now.

Dickie: Sometimes just grooves or Mig's riffs, take it from there.

Frank: I pretty much don't write too much music anymore. Lately I just write lyrics and help arrange the jams and riffs into "songs." As for that Chili Pepper image, thing...

- (a) None of us have tattoos
 - (b) None of us wear earrings
 - (c) None of us have really funny clothes
 - (d) We couldn't play naked with socks over our dicks because they're too small. Except for Kelly. He could hang a pair of socks over his ding dong.
- Copycat look shit just isn't for us, although I've love to see us look like Nelson.



Question 9: What's in the future?

Kelly: No more of that touring shit until we're signed.

Mig: Amen

Frank: In 1992, umm, have a nice big bus, touring with Fishbone or Faith No More or someone huge like that, or just have a good record deal so lots and lots of people can hear us. I don't know, just as long as we're having fun, I don't care all that much. But it has been over six years. Where's the crystal ball?

Write to Anthrophobia. They love fan mail. PO Box 6257, Wyomissing PA 19610.



DICKIE



MIG

PARASITES

by Jim Testa

The Parasites? Name sound familiar? Well, maybe it does and maybe it doesn't. Like a lot of Jersey punk bands (does The Undead ring a bell?), The Parasites seem like they've been around forever...only they never seem to be around. Who are these people? And why, all of a sudden, are we being inundated with Parasitemania -- a great lp of catchy poptunes and a 7" cover of the Misfits' "Last Caress" on Shredder, two singles on Forefront Records...

This started out to be a simple interview with Nikki Parasite. It ended being sort of dinner and beer at Maxwell's with all three Parasites, Muddy Mike Young of Forefront Records, and two other mooks who are either the band's roadies, bodyguards, or two shmoees who just wandered into the restaurant and sat down to eat with us. I don't know, it was one of those nights. Read on...

Question: All the songs on your new album have the original copyright date on the lyric sheet, and the oldest song goes back to 1983. How far back does the band actually go?

Nikki Parasite: (Looks at Ronnie) What was it, '86? Yeah, 1986.

Q: So why are there songs on the record from 1983 and 1984?

Nikki: They be Accelerators songs. (Accelerators was Ronnie's old band before the Parasites)

Q: So the Parasites actually came together in 1986, with you two (Nikki and Ronni) and...a different drummer?

Ronnie: I can't remember how many different drummers!

Q: Who is on the record?

Nikki: He (pointing to current drummer Rob Goellner, who's drinking a club soda and talking to one of the mooks) plays on some of it, and Dave Ross plays on the rest of it. Dave was the drummer in the Accelerators.

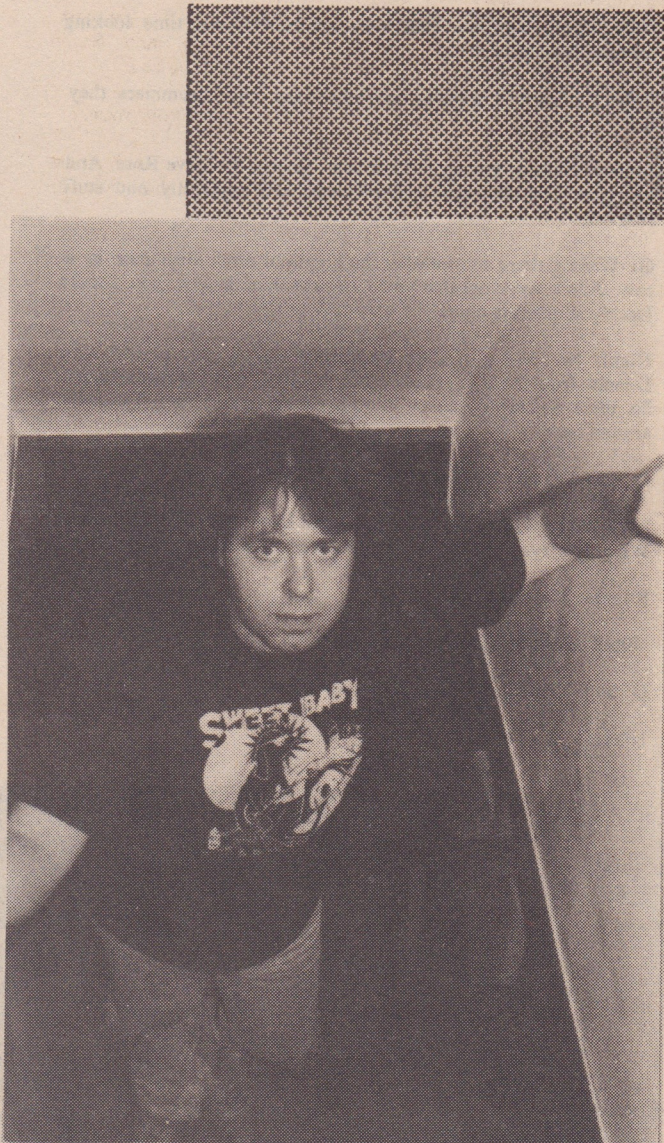
Q: The Accelerators were from down the shore and put out a 7" on Mutha Records, right?

Ronnie: Right, in 1984. You actually hated that record. I still have the review at home.

Q: So what happened with this album? You didn't have enough Parasites songs to fill it up?

Nikki: There are enough Parasites songs to fill up a 25-CD boxed set. Seriously.

Q: So why did you use all the Accelerators songs?



Nikki: Well, Ron and I each picked which ones we wanted to do, and those were the songs he picked.

Q: All the really old ones?

Ronnie: Well, we just never stopped playing 'em.

Nikki: And they were unrecorded, and so now they're out.

Q: So the band's been around since 1986, and if you don't mind my saying so, you guys haven't exactly been burning down the club scene. Where have you been the last five years?

Nikki: Until we found Rob, we spent most of our time looking for new drummers.

Rob: I think I fit in better than any of the other drummers they had.

Ronnie: Nobody could play our beat. Except for Dave Ross. And he's just real interested in roots music and rockabilly and stuff like that.

Q: Wasn't there a point after the eighth or ninth drummer in a row didn't work out that you started to think maybe you should just try something else?

Nikki: No. We played here and there during that period with Dennis from the Blisters taking over guitar, and I played drums. So there was always a way to do it. We do play, but not usually around here.

Q: Name some places you've played more than once.

Nikki: The Pipeline, Neri's on Staten Island, the Brighton Bar. We only played the Court Tavern once, our first show.

Ronnie: The Dirt Club.

Nikki: Right, the Dirt Club. Scoundrels, Valentino's.

Q: So you're like a bona fide Jersey band.

Nikki: I guess so.

Q: People always ask me what "the Jersey scene" is like and I just look at them and go "duh."

Nikki: That's it, that's exactly what the Jersey scene is like.

Rob: People around here are really hard to impress.

Nikki: Yeah. No one even goes to shows anymore.

Ronnie: L.A. is totally different. You can go there and act like a rock star overnight just by hanging out and looking like a rock star, because there are people all over the place going to the clubs and looking for bands. You just stand there and jump up and down with a guitar in your hand and you're a rock star.

Nikki: We just do that in the privacy of our own homes here.

Q: It's interesting listening to the songs on your album, you can almost chart the history of punk music through the 80's, starting with the Ramones and Misfits. You don't still want to be like Dee Dee Ramone, do you? (Referring to the song "I Wanna Be Like Dee Dee Ramone," c. 1983).

Ronnie: I still like that style, yeah.

Q: No, I mean, you don't want to be a burnt out old punk with a lot of tattoos making rap records.

Ronnie: The song was more a tribute to the Ramones than about Dee Dee.

Nikki: See, when Ron gets to be 40, he's gonna start doing rap stuff and change his name to Kool Moe Dee Dee.

Q: And the other big influence in your sound is obviously the Misfits, since you've just released a Misfits cover.

Nikki: Yeah, it seemed like a good thing to do.

Mike Young: More Misfits shit.

Nikki: Everybody buys it, though.

Q: Any idea why the Misfits have been so popular for so long?



PARASITES

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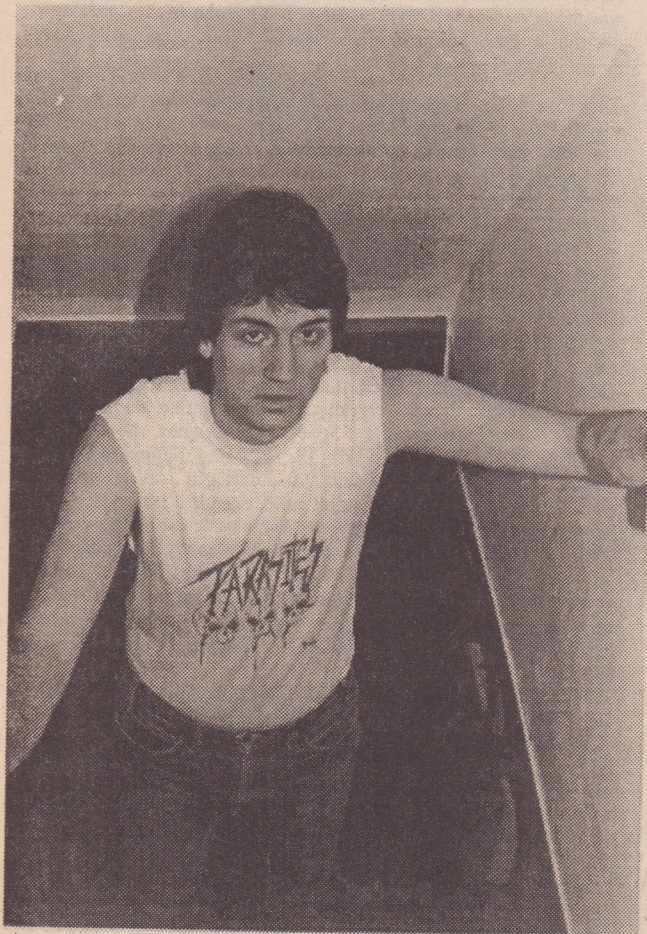
Nikki: I don't know, I just like them a lot. They had good songs and they looked real evil and scary, and a lot of people like that.

Q: Can you think of anyone today that the Parasites would fit in with?

Nikki: You mean musically?

Ronnie: Danzig!

Nikki: No! Maybe if the Buzzcocks did another reunion, we'd like to open on that tour. Or if the Ramones went through a time warp, that would be good. That's the problem, nobody's around anymore that we like. People don't tend to play our kind of stuff these days. Maybe more in Europe than here.



RONNIE

Q: How did you hook up with Mel Shredder?

Nikki: The band Sweet Baby Jesus were out here, and theirs was the first album that Ron and I liked a whole lot in a long time, so we went out to the Pipeline to see them and got their addresses. And I sent them out a tape and said to throw it at someone who might like it, and they threw it at Mel. So that's how we hooked up with him.

Q: That's quite a compliment for Mel to put so much effort into your band just because he liked a tape.

Nikki: Yeah, well after he liked the first tape, I sent him some more tapes, because we have like eight million songs. And he liked about six million of them.

Q: So now that you have all these records out, are you going to tour?

Nikki: Yeah, we're definitely going to do that, hopefully sometime next summer. After the second album is out, we're going to do a bunch of East Coast type of things, and then depending on where the best deal is, we'll either tour the U.S. or go to Europe. We're actually very popular in Germany. I have boxes of all our old records sitting at home that I could never get rid of, and now I'm sending them all to distributors in Europe.

Q: Do you think being around for a long time and never really going anywhere is going to hurt you now that you're trying to jump start your career all of a sudden?

Nikki: No, I really think that it's much better, because you already have contacts. And people know who you are, sort of. Instead of starting out with no records and no nothing, we have all this stuff out already, so it's definitely better.

Q: Have you ever toured anywhere?

Nikki: Yes, we did a tour of New Jersey. We played two shows in one weekend once. We were even going to make flyers for it and call it our Dirt Club Tour.

Q: So now you finally catch a break and have all these plans, and I understand Ronnie is leaving the band.

Ronnie: Right. Basically...

Nikki: Be nice.

Ronnie: I'm being nice.

Rob: Be honest.

Nikki: No, don't be honest, be nice!

Ronnie: I'm going to be honest but nice. The record label wants the band to go in a more pop direction, and my musical tastes are elsewhere.

Q: More punk?

Ronnie: Yeah, but catchy punk. A lot of people think I'm crazy, but there's a part of me that doesn't care about stardom. I don't want to pursue it anymore, I just want to lay back.

Q: I don't know if I'd say that you're pursuing stardom.

Nikki: Well, you can always pursue it. That doesn't mean you're going to get it.

Ronnie: The band has a chance to make it. But I really don't want to be a part of something I don't like. Maybe I'll miss out on something but I really don't care.

ATTENTION: PUNK ROCKERS!

This is your chance to become a Parasite. The Parasites are looking for a bassist and a second guitarist. You must be able to play a musical instrument, sing reasonably well, and be willing to tour. Influences: Misfits, Ramones, moving toward more of a Descendents type thing. Sound good? Write the Parasites for an audition!

The Parasites, PO Box 234, Livingston NJ 07039

New Brunswick is one of the few surviving centers of cultural activity in this mostly boring, environmentally & politically polluted state of ours. This is most often due to a handful of dedicated veteran musicians/poets than to the transient students of Rutgers U. Although NB is not the musical hotbed it was a few years back, there are a number of bands and clubs that continue, no matter what trends affect college radio. The Court Tavern seemingly has been around forever, has live music on two floor, and has always been one of the best places to hear original music in NJ. The main room downstairs is quite funky in decor, yet completely comfortable; and thanks to soundman Kirk, has the best sound of any small club I've attended. With little or no monetary help from the owners, my old pal Tom Crowe continues to help out both local and, occasionally, touring bands. His phone number for bookings is (201) 846-5937.

Four veteran bands have recently released music worth consuming, so here goes... One of the first singles I ever reviewed for JB was the perfect debut by Frozen Concentrate, a diverse folk/rock ensemble. Frozen put out three fine singles and one lp, and played hundreds of great sets. After a half decade of trying, they finally called it quits. Their leader/singer/guitarist and songwriter, Tina Maschi, has put together a trio called GREEN LION BURNING, which features the talents of two other veteran players - Richard "Bear" Graham (formerly of the Lunar Bear Ensemble), a superb percussionist of world rhythm, and Mike Soga, a happening elec. bassist (formerly of Slap In The Face and Out Go The Lights.)

Green Lion Burning has just released a lovely 5-song demo. In these days of overused technology & college radio cliches, this cassette is truly a breath of fresh air - refreshingly pure, worldly in scope & sound, yet local in down-to-earth sense. There is an almost childlike positive feeling of mostly acoustic sounds swirling around Tina's rich, smokey, melancholy voice. Those vocals have retained their earthy, softly quivering, American Indian-like tone, and the sincerity of her lyrics shines through, often attempting to break through the bullshit of modern life. Mike's bass constantly bubbles, providing nice grooves, with Bear's ultra-selective percussion spice. An excellent job of self-production as well. Write to 258 Handy Street, New Brunswick NJ 08901 for a copy.

Both Tina & Bear were original members of Lunar Bear Ensemble, whose first release - recorded almost two years ago - has finally seen the light of day on MuWorks (all 3 formats). And man, was it worth the wait! Led by John Richey, formerly of voodoo rock legends The Young Turks (currently reforming in Portland, Oregon), LBE was/is an all-star unit of New Brunswick veterans from different bands.

Mr. Richey is one of NJ's finest poets and performers, and has been a friend and inspiration to me for years. The group on this release includes Doug "Sluggo" Vizthum on lead guitar (ex-Please'd Youth, now in Bad Karma), Eddie Freeze (of Crossfire

Choir fame) on keyboards and guitar, Tom Diello on bass (also in Bad Karma), Bear on assorted percussion, and monster drummer Martin Atkins (PiL, Killing Joke, Ministry). This smokin' release could very well be the strongest work to come out of NJ in years. It is a powerful combination of talents, superbly produced by Bob Musso and one of those rare recordings of a poet fronting a band that really works. Listening to it is a totally draining experience. This music is in no way a free mess of improvised jamming, but ten well-crafted pieces, composed by the band to give deeper meaning to John's well-worn observations of life. It is meant for adventurous listeners and yes, LBE are re-forming for gigs in '91.

Those aforementioned Young Turks were one of the most distinguished bands to ever come out of New Brunswick. I dug them immensely as a band, and as friends. Although they released four powerful singles, their superb voodoo rockin' lp was never released, a cryin' shame. While John Richey continued his music with Lunar Bear and Machine Gun, the Turks' lead singer, Billy Snow, disappeared.

Turns out that Billy moved to Portland and has finally put together a new Young Turks. Their new 5-song demo arrived in the mail right around Xmas and what a treat it is. The Young Turks began as a trio, later evolving into a 7-piece unit with synth, percussion, and a female vocalist. Billy has once again stripped it down to bare essentials and reformed the band as a trio, so his unique voice and guitar are featured up front. Both of these talents are to be reckoned with. His voice still has that whiney, twisted, possessed, tough-yet-fragile tone, Gun Club-like in its bent appeal. Billy has also stripped 3 strings off his 12-string acoustic with pickup, giving it an unusual semi-acoustic ring that cuts through. He has a way of hyper strumming that gives the same adrenalin rush one gets from the best punk music.

Billy is still a fine poet/lyricist as well, and like the best, his lyrics have layers of meaning. Speaking in tongues, the universal sad truth, the pain we all endure, the recurring nightmare of love turned bad... He writes of emotions moving in waves, and the electric current of love that we all seek, even if it lasts only a few moments. His "Sweet Misogynist" is a classic example, dealing with the subtle manipulation of the masses by oversimplified billboard visuals - how often we react to the outside of a person and not to what is inside. It's good to hear Snow & Co. providing us with their unique brew again, and I truly hope some smart label picks him up this time around. (Young Turks, 2027 SE Madison #6, Portland OR 97214).

It's been five fucking years since their one and only lp on Buy Our Records, but nevertheless, Children In Adult Jails are back. Well, sorta. In actuality, they never really broke up, but the band became more of a hobby. They've been through three bass players and stopped doing gigs until recently. They WERE the weirdest band on Buy Our and yes, their warped sense of humor is still intact. They still are difficult to classify, as their new 7" shows. "Angeltits & Beanbag" is an intriguing mess - short bursts of post-punk snarl, with the bass & drums coming from another room, disembodied voices spewing twisted words too bizarre to repeat. Most confusing. The flip, "Crispin Glover," is completely enchanting and sounds like a different band. The vocals are upfront and whispered with some fine swirling acoustic guitars. Who else but CIAJ could sing an invitation to one of Hollywood's oddest characters to "put me in your examining

Billy Snow, YOUNG TURKS

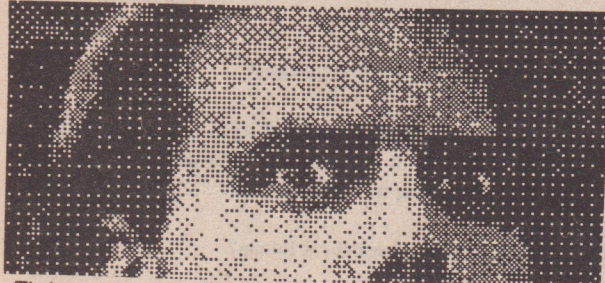


ON THE OUTSIDE

by Bruce Gallanter

chair, put my feet up so you can touch me there"? I'll leave the rest to your imagination. This is a limited edition single, so search it out and try to catch them live!

Since P.Funk split up in the early 80's, their influence has continued to grow. Besides the inconsistent but occasionally cool offshoot stuff like George Clinton, Bootsy, and Bernie Worrell, we see/hear more bands taking on a particular era of P.Funk sound and making it their own -- sometimes succeeding (Red Hot Chili Peppers) or falling short of funk greatness (Royal Crescent Mob). I am proud to herald NJ's own Arnold The Pig, who hold down the fort at the Court Tavern on Wednesdays as the funk monsters they are.



Their smokin' six-song cassette will make you wanna get down, if you're a dancing fool... These people are well seasoned musicians, with an ever-wailing frontline of good vocals, hot guitar with minimal effects (just a touch of wah wah), and never any overdone keys. Lyrically, targets of complaint include Joe The Politician, who'll save us all if he doesn't push the button and kill us all. It is the music that pulls us in, an invigorating groove fest. Achieve dancing nirvana by acquiring this tape from Arnold The Pig c/o Marco, 230 Inza Street, Highland Park, NJ 08904.

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CARRY NATION

Psychedelic Folkies Who Go Pop

by Tom Brebric

Carry Nation is a relatively young 5-piece from the NYC area, partaking in folkie psyche-pop music. The band had just returned from a late fall tour when this interview was conducted with John Rokosny (guitar and vocals) and Beth McCormack (vocals, flute), on the 10th anniversary of John Lennon's death.

Q: How did the tour go?

It was 75% colleges and small or average rock clubs in small towns.

Q: Was this tour all with the Smithereens?

John: Yeah. The tour lasted from the third week in September until December 3, when it ended in NY. This was our first tour. We occasionally had gone to Boston and D.C.

Q: Is this going to be the permanent lineup?

John: Yeah, unless we kill each other. The band formed in Sept. of 1987 and John and Simon Archambault (bass) are the original members.

Beth: I'm the new member.

Q: Do you have any good tour stories? Jersey Beat is big on tour diaries.

John: Not really. Our van broke down and Simon fixed it, but I don't think that's too exciting.



Q: Did you try out any new material while on tour?

John: No, we played mainly the stuff on the album. [See review this issue.] It was worked out with the soundman to be that way. Playing the same set gets you really tight. When we had a night off, we each ended up singing our parts in the van.

Q: As we sit here eating grossly overpriced imitation Mexican junk food, it leads me to wonder: Was your tour diet nutritionally balanced?

John: We had a lot of hot meals with the Smithereens but we ended up eating a lot of burritos at gas stations late at night.

Beth: Every single gas station/convenience store across the land has the same junk, like Lance's Crackers & Cheese. Fortunately, our roadie stole food for us.

Carry Nation

Q: Are you happy with the distribution of this album?

John: Every place we went to on the tour, we found the record.

Beth: Rough Trade really pushed to get it out for the tour. Catherine at Heyday [Records] not only made sure the record was there, but people would come up and interview us or articles would appear because she had got in touch with them prior to our arrival.

Q: Was there a single off this album?

John: No, we're album oriented rock. Actually, timing-wise and financially, we just didn't do a single.

Q: Did taking off for two months cause any problems for any of the band members?

Beth: I was really lucky. I got a leave of absence. John doesn't work so his schedule was flexible (ha ha). I dread the day I have to ask my boss for more time off in the Spring when we plan a mini tour.

Q: You're a NYC band. How did the connection with Heyday in California come about?

Beth: When I was shopping the tape around, we found out we could have a tour if we had a record out, so I started telling record companies that we definitely had a tour.

John: We lied.

Beth: Finally, Gerald from Rough Trade said he'd help us and put us in contact with Carol at Heyday. I think we got the record deal because we just kept calling them and bugging them.

John: Ironically, Heyday is named after a Fairport Convention album put out a few years ago and we do a cover of theirs.

Q: Your bio describes your music as "pop." I'm not sure that's how it came across to me, personally. Would you care to elaborate?

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SOULSIDE

John: I think the term pop has changed a lot over the years.... It's always been what's popular, but my definition is like classic, three-minute songs like the Beatles, Nick Lowe, and classic structures with choruses, bridges, and melodies. I feel we fit pop in that fashion.

Q: John, did you do all the songwriting on this album?

John: Yes, except for the last song, which Beth did.

Beth: It was an a capella [song], no one else wanted to do it. I sing eight of the songs, but I want to start writing more.

Q: Beth, I know you have classic training. Musically, what were you doing before Carry Nation?

Beth: I took about 15 years of classical flute and a few years of classical vocal lessons in college, and that's about all I used to do. I feel the classic training gives me a lot of control over my voice now, especially after playing 40 gigs in a row.

Q: What is your intent with this album? Are you hoping for a bigger label to pick you up by touring with the Smithereens?

Beth: The Smithereens have been very helpful to us, and hopefully we'll continue some kind of relationship with them. We're good friends with them. As for immediately, our plans are to put out a new demo.

Q: How did you get the band's name? There's another band with the same name [interviewed in Jersey Beat #40, so don't be confused!].

John: Yeah, we've been trying to get them to change their name. Ours is trademarked. We just compiled a list of names out of a dictionary and by the time of our first gig in Asbury Park, we needed a name and everyone felt this one was best. We don't hold any particular affection for Carry Nation, though.

Beth: I do. She was quite a woman, over six feet tall, and weighted 175 lbs.

John: I heard the other band has changed their name to The Legendary Carry Nation.

Q: Who would you cite as personal influences in your songwriting?

John: The Beatles, the Byrds.

Beth: Jethro Tull, oh and I love Black Sabbath.

John: Currently, I like King Missile and The Replacements.

Q: It's kind of ironic how you mention the Beatles and how today is the 10th anniversary of John Lennon's death.

Beth: Mmm, Yoko went to my school, Sarah Lawrence. Rumor is that she still contributes ice cream to the school.

Q: Any last comments or social statements?

Beth: Yeah, I was just wondering if I send all the receipts from Motel 6's we stayed at, if they'd send us t shirts?

John: Yeah, if you send them back their towels. Actually, we don't have any social statements to make. We just play so people can have a good time.



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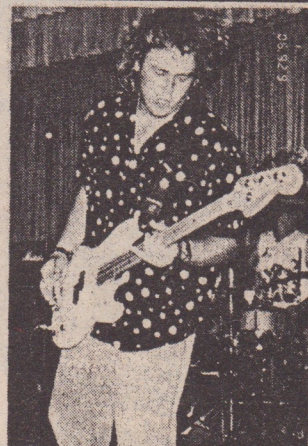
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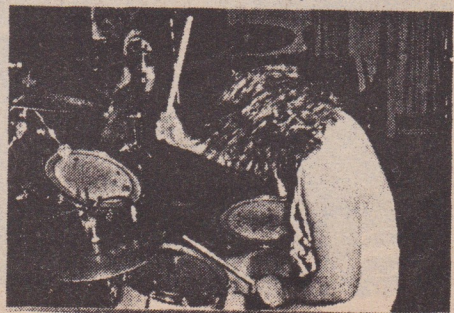
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Hardcore

23 MORE MINUTES

"A Place To Go" 5-song 7" EP

Very Small, PO Box 8223, Emeryville CA 94662

Exactly the way I remembered this band from two summers last summer (one at ABC No Rio, another in somebody's basement in Minneapolis): sloppy, infectious garage-core with an abundance of catchy licks. Cool. (Jim Testa)

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

"Blind Eyes And Apple Pie" 4-song 7" EP

Bum Steer, 336 Libertyville Rd #1, New Paltz NY 12561

Angry clenched-jawed hardcore in the In Effect style. Excellent lyric/photo insert. Play it loud. (Jim)

ADMIRAL

3-song 7" EP

SoulForce, PO Box 10094, Scotts AZ 85271

The band's from Harrisburg PA, even though the record label's in Arizona. "Brother Can You Spare A Dime" is an inspired plea for charity told from the point of view of an illiterate and barely coherent homeless person (at least, I think that's what it is), while "Horns Lay Silent" revs up to an anthemic pitch. Admiral isn't afraid to experiment with tempos and guitar sounds (mixing acoustics with electrics and turning off the distortion now and then, for instance), making this a rich and rewarding EP for the mosh-weary listener. Although I go off a bit on Sean Linwood's physical gyrations in our live review this issue, his Ian MacKaye-influenced vocals work well on record, infusing these songs with emotion. Good job. (Jim)

AMENITY

"This Is Our Struggle" EP

Vinyl Communications, Box 8623, Chula Vista CA 92012

First off, credit has to be given for the amount of work that must have been put into the single. The packaging is amazing, including colored vinyl, a large glossy fold-out lyric sheet, and excellent artwork on the sleeve (inside & out). Amenity remind me of a metal-sounding MDC, with songs dealing with love overruling hate, about truth over tradition, etc. The production gives everything a lot of power and builds up to an explosion on songs like the title track. While musically it was a bit too metal for me at times, it's tight, grooving hardcore that deserves your support. (Tom Angelli)

ANASTASIA SCREAMED

Laughing Down The Limehouse, lp

Dist. by Dutch East India

This is enjoyable college-rock ala' Husker Du. Anastasia Screamed will leave you humming for hours as the choruses to songs like "Lime" and "Beautiful" dance in your head. Some of these songs are more radio-ready than others and some of it reminds me of early Lemonheads. Recommended. (Jamie Turner)

BAZOOKA JOE

Two Thirds, lp

Merkin, Box 16282, Baltimore MD 21210

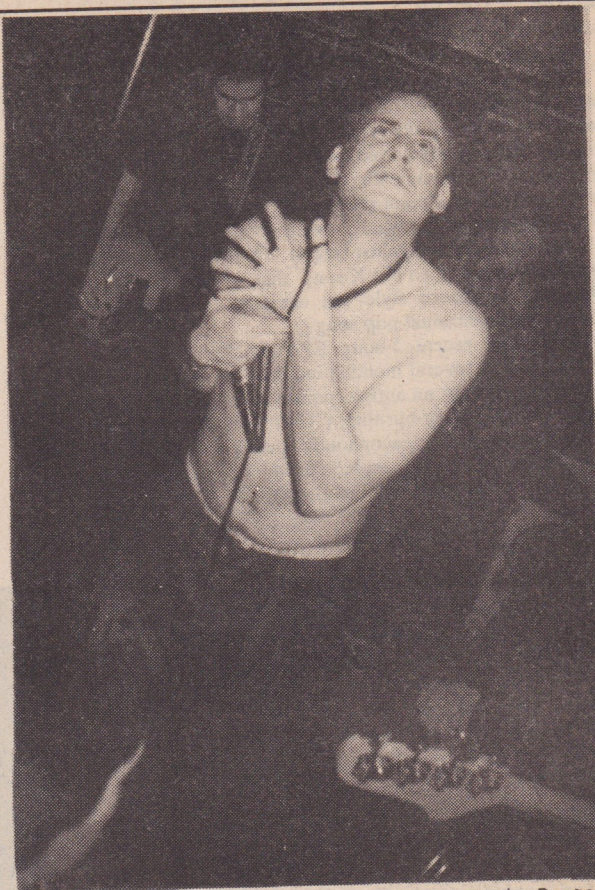
Not to be confused with the Myrtle Beach, SC Bazooka Joe, this is a good, grungy punk band. They have the whole NY Lower East Side art-rock sound - dark and brooding, like Live Skull with maybe some Joy Division influence in the way the bass line carries the songs while the guitars jam. The guitars remind me of Sonic Youthers Thurston and Lee at their tamer moments. This is a short but sweet release and on colored vinyl yet. (Jamie)

BLATZ

Cheaper Than The Beer, EP

Lookout

What with Green Day and Samiam turning the San Francisco Bay area punk scene into a sappy emo/postpunk nightmare, it



ADMIRAL

Photo by Jim Testa

figures that it would take a big mouthed kid from Philly to move out to Berkeley and straighten things out. Jesse Blatz already has a reputation as the most hated man in Berkeley punkdom, and he deserves it. Perhaps best known for starting a riot at a suburban party which resulted in a mention in Herb Caen's column (nobody ever figured it was the same Jesse who works as a security guard at Herb's newspaper), he has also paraded nude in front of a gang of skinheads, squishing his underwear in their faces (they filed indecent exposure charges with the cops). Blatz also features Eggplant of Absolute Zippo fanzine and two of the most obnoxious female singers ever to hit vinyl. Though they view the world with a certain amount of naivete, there's no question that when Blatz sez "Fuk Shit Up," they mean it. The songs are basic punk ditties that could probably be made better with the addition of a second guitar. Still, this is punk so let's not get too technical. The closest comparison would be perhaps Fear on an unusually sloppy, drunk night. Blatz knows what so few young bands today do -- how to say what you want in a song without it coming across as bullshit. Check this one out, it's one of the few punk records of the year. (Ben Weasel)

BOOM & THE LEGION OF DOOM

Detroit, lp

Depression, Box 219, Battle Creek, MI 49016

The first song on this record sounds like a Butthole Surfers jam session. Beyond that, this is a typically generic thrash record. It's amazing after 6 years of putting out EP's that this band hasn't gotten any better. I guess I'm obliged to say this is their best record to date and I would buy this before the new Foreigner record, but I don't think I could impress a girl by playing this for her or telling her I knew the band or anything. (Cold-Iron)

BORN AGAINST

"Eulogy"/"Riding With Mary" 7"

"Born Against" 5-song EP

Vermiform, PO Box 1145, NYC 10276

I've seen Born Against live quite a few times, and while I've always been impressed by the maniacal energy of singer Sam McPheeters and the power of the band, I've never been able to understand one word of the lyrics. These two 7 inches correct that, with handsomely illustrated lyric sheets and poster inserts. "Eulogy" (the 7" comes with Dear Jesus fanzine #7) says goodbye to a friend who's not really dead but who might just as well be in the eyes of the band, having given his life over to religion (a frequent Born Against target). The flip side is what I found most interesting, an old X song that proves that B.A.'s feedback/squeal moshcore style can actually work within the framework of a conventional pop song.

The band's more recent 5-song EP (actually recorded last summer but delayed several months) includes an anti-Christmas carol, an anti-rape song, an anti-corporate rock diatribe, and the aural equivalent of a flag-burning ("Half Mast"). Again, you wouldn't know it from their cacophonous performances, but these lyrics actually work as poetry, and the production (by Don Fury, natch) perfectly captures the raw tumult of the B.A. sound. (Jim)

CRINGER/HOPEFUL MONSTERS

4-song split 7" EP

Hippycore, PO Box 195, Mesa AZ 85211

Cringer is the Berkeley band whose "Karin" EP remains one of the catchiest, happiest releases ever to come from Lookout Records. Hopeful Monsters is J@ck from Hippycore's band (a characterization I'm sure he'd resent...let's just say he's the singer). Each band gets two songs, and the EP comes with a thought-provoking 30-page booklet that raises political and environmental concerns, much like Hippycore fanzine. Worthwhile. (Jim)

DEAD STEELMILL

Dead Steelmill, EP

Underdog

In Chicago, you've got your North Side, West Side, and South Side. The West Side is largely made up of poor people and a lot of crack activity, and the South Side mostly consists of black and hispanic families and a lot of broken down factories. Of course, this is a generalization; Mayor Daley's family was from the South Side, and they're very, very white. But for the purposes of punk rock, it should be noted that almost all band and club activity takes place on the North Side. Dead Steelmill are from the South Side. Strike one. They're a hardcore band. Strike two. Their singer is hispanic. Strike three. Well, until Underdog picked them up, that is. Dead Steelmill have been kicking around Chicago for over five years, and they finally have a record out. It's ultra-fast hardcore, but no cheating (lotsa "fast" bands employ drummers who are either playing half time or in a pointless blur to create the illusion of fast - this drummer hits every beat). It's political, but in a much different sense than most political punk bands. Dead Steelmill's politics center on factories closing and pollution strangling the air. It's about their reality and not what they've seen on tv or heard in another punk song. Dead Steelmill is the only really fast band around that I still like, 'cause they're sincere and they're fucking powerful. This record doesn't do them justice, a live setting is more suited to their music. But it's a good record and one that would've been huge had it come out 5 years ago. (Ben)

DOWNCAST - 7" EP

(Comes with No Answers Fanzine, Box 680, Goleta CA 93116)

Like a murky mudpuddle on a gloomy day, Downcast is no fun. Downcast take themselves ultra-seriously, to the point where they come across as the left wing equivalent of Richard Nixon. This record sounds like it was recorded under the influence of a severe case of diaper rash. Half the time, cheesy death metal riffs provide the background for straight-edge voiced singer Kevin Doss to whine about various socio-political 90's issues. The world is an ugly place indeed but burrheaded California white

boys writing hardcore tunes about it is not my idea of making things better. (Ben)

THE FREEZE

Guilty Face, 10" EP

Ax/ction, Box 623, Kendall Sq. Sta, Cambridge MA 02142

The Freeze was one of the first hardcore bands I ever heard and one of the best. Best know to me for stealing the show on the "Boston, Not L.A." comp, they put out a few great records too, including the "Guilty Face" 7" on Modern Method. This disc is a repressing of that 7", with three extra songs. If you've never heard The Freeze, this is a great disc to get you acquainted. They had everything the DK's did and more: severely obnoxious vocals, heavy doses of frustrated sarcasm, way trebly mixes and a rhythm section tighter than a virgin brownhole and faster than a masturbating monkey. "Guilty Face" is a great party record as well as being a punk classic and worth your while to skip lunch a few days to buy this one. (Ben)

FOREVER NOW

3-song 7" EP

% Nathan Limbaugh, 8 Bloomfield Dr, Mt Holly NJ 08060

Power hardcore. "Burning Issue" quotes the New Testament and deals with temptation, probably the most original song here, albeit from a Christian perspective. I really don't like the singsong spoken-word vocals much though. (Jim)



CITIZENS ARREST

Photo by Jim Testa

FUEL 7" EP

Lookout

Well, everybody at MRR seems to like Fuel so you know there's gotta be something wrong with them. I liked their tune on the Very Small comp, but this poop just doesn't cut the mustard. This is softcore, all bundled up in bleak packaging to look melancholy and vaguely desperate. The music is hardcore without any attitude or conviction, and the singer yells in an anguished voice a lot, occasionally straying towards the Curly MacKaye school of vocalizing. Their guitarist has a great band called The Skinflutes who work in this style a lot better. Guaranteed to challenge or offend no one, these songs make me think of beards and sunsets. (Ben)

FUEL

Fuel, lp

Rough Trade

This one is better than their crappy Lookout 7-inch, maybe they feel more comfortable on a big, ugly label. The punk tunes are really great but that's only three or four. The other songs are in that post-punk/anguished/reflective vein that makes me wanna heave. Lotsa talk going around about how these guys are leading the way into the future of punk. I don't buy it. Fuck you, Rough Trade, and fuck you, Fuel, for being just another cog in the corporate machine. (Ben)

GLEE CLUB

"Footlong #1" 4-song 7" EP

Footlong, 26 Hayes Rd, E Greenbush NY 12061

Happy sounding, catchy, poppy punkcore from this Albany band. I love "hardcore" bands that can do more than thrash, and this trio can, working in bits of funk, psychedelia and power-pop along with a solid punk attack. Comes with a pic sleeve and a lyric/photo sheet. Way cool. (Lisa)

GO! - "Why Suffer" 12-song 7" EP,

Forefront Records, 280 Fairmount Ave, Chatham NJ 07928

GO!/BAD TRIP Split 7" "Tour EP" (8 song EP)

Skene Records

Nobody was better at packing more songs onto a 7 inch than GO! I use the past tense advisedly, since the band has come back from the dead more times than Dracula, but with Mike Bullshit in Austin studying anthropology, these two records will probably be the last GO! product. The "Why Suffer" EP beautifully combines both the serious and goofy sides of this remarkable band, with Mike's lightning-swift vocals reducing whole sentences into mere syllables. "A Day To Fight For" addresses gay rights, "Why Suffer" looks at death, and "Hard As" and "Our Scene" confront the violence of the NY/HC community, but on the lighter side, there's the 20-second "ABC Song" dedicated to ABC No Rio and Mike's visit to "Giant Training Camp." The last song on the record sums it up for me: "It WAS Fun."

Skene's split 7" offers a tinny and unfocused GO! doing second-rate GO! songs (I used to have a pocket AM radio with a 2 -inch speaker that sounded sort of like this record). Interestingly, though, the music here strays from the band's trademark straight ahead thrash and explores jazzy progressions and a little garage rock, sort of like the way Minor Threat's "Salad Days" ep hinted of a different sound in their unrealized future. The Bad Trip side offers two muscular and energetic hardcore tunes by one of New York's most solid bands. (Jim)

HI HO SILVER

TLagooslnswipistbtppimmsmgisbiamh, lp

PO Box 2055, 3140 BB Maassluis, Netherlands

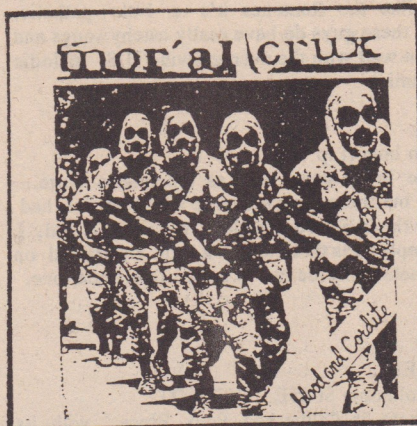
I'm not a linguist, but looking at the title of this album, you can tell that these guys speak a different language. At first I thought this was some sort of lame compilation; the variety of music was wide, but none of it sounded interesting or was played well. Then I realized it was just one lame band. If trying desperately to be novel and unique is a sign of a good band, then these guys are the best. (Jamie)

JESUS CHRUST

"Blasphemy" 18-song 7" EP

Fudgeworthy, 8 Stevin Dr, Woburn MA 01801

Imagine a stenchcore version of the Stations Of The Cross with squat-band distortion on the vocals and guitars, recorded on 4 track, with 18 songs squeezed onto a 7". Brrrrrrrrrr. (Jim)



MORAL CRUX

"Load Of Dead Tracks" 6 song 7" EP

Assault With Intent To Free Fanzine-Box 1484 Oxford MS 38655

"Blood & Cordite" 4-song 7" EP

Yo Menzer Wax, 3423 W Providence, Spokane WA 99205

With a name like Moral Crux and an address in the Pacific Northwest, I expected music as sodden and heavy as a Seattle winter. Wrong. These guys play perky pop-punk, a little grungier but with the same nimble touch and hooky esprit as Green Day. "Load Of Dead Tracks," a collection of outtakes from the band's 1987 debut lp, is faster and thrashier. Both come with picture sleeves and lyrics sheets, and "Load" has a cool photo booklet as well. (Jim)

POINT BLANK

7-Song 7" EP

Nemesis

Four Angry Young Men from California who hate everything and aren't afraid to sing about it. They should move to New York and sign to In-Effect, they'd fit right in. (Lisa)

POLITICAL ASYLUM

Windows On The World, lp

(3 Balmoral Pl, Stirling Scotland UK FK8 2RD)

I always have a little more respect for European political bands than the Americans. It seems to me that the foreigners mean it, man, while most American bands are annoying little pukers passing time until they grow up and get real jobs. On the other hand, these Europeans tend to be a little dogmatic, to say the least. That said, I can sincerely give a mohawk salute to Political Asylum for putting out a catchy, melodic punk record with PC but not overbearing lyrics. Unlike their British brethren, PA actually values decent production and doesn't mind cheery melodies. Half this lp is studio cuts, the other half is live and it's all good sound quality. Picks are "Solitary," "Systems Of War," and "Standing Over Me." A bit too political for the Blatz swilling punks but a pleasant disc nonetheless. (Ben)

PRESSUREHEAD

"Bad Hype" 3-song 7" EP

% Steve Gantman, Box 18618, Rochester NY 14618

Despite a plethora of familiar Minor Threat riffs that run through this EP, there's also a nice funky streak that sets Pressurehead's pressure-cooker hardcore off from the pack. A nice change of pace, with hooks and melodies that stick in your head. (Jim)

PSYCHOTIC YOUTH

Some Fun, lp
Skyclad

This is enjoyable pop-punk from Germany with the usual high and low points. If you like the Ramones, you'll like these guys, which I guess is a high point, but it brings on the bad point: They sound so blatantly like the Ramones it's a little pathetic. Overlooking that fact, these guys do have really catchy songs and their music would fit in well with the ever-growing U.S. melodic happy-core genre. (Jamie)

PULLERMAN

RPN Records, German import lp

This is more music in the same vein as labelmates Urge... Outburst, metal-punk, but these guys are quite a bit better. I had to listen to this a few times before it sunk in, but when it did, I liked it. My only complaint is that they go a little overboard on metallic tangents sometimes. Side two is better than side one. (Jamie)

PUZZLEHEAD

"See Thru" 6-song 7" EP

% Brian McGee, 71 Columbia St #5E, NYC 10002

My favorite song here is "Suburban Punk Blues;" with its goofy goin' to the hardcore show lyrics and corny Chuck Berry breaks, it's also the closest in spirit to this band's earlier incarnation as Product 19. The other five tunes here are more typical NY/HC, with faster'n'Bad Brains guitars and drums, forceful vocals by Zack, and relationship-oriented lyrics. Comes with a nice foldout lyric sheet with caricatures of the band. (Jim)

RESISTORS

Tiny Scars, lp

Music GEIL, 730 N LaSalle St, Chicago IL 60610

Although I'm no big fan of American metal crossover, these Germans do it with enough variety to make it work. The songs range from angry political anthems to sweetly melodic ballads, and whatever the style, everything is played crisply and with a great sense of pace. I bet they'd be great to see live. (Jim)

RESIST

Resist, EP

Media Blitz, 5610 SE Steele, Portland OR 97206

Somebody oughta wake these goofs up and let them know it's not 1982 anymore. All these fast, heavy politically conscious bands claim that they're doing and saying what they really believe, and that's probably true; but why the fuck can't they pick up a different angle? This isn't a new band, it's a bunch of bored kids imitating MDC. As far as I'm concerned, faster-than-you politicore like this is a hell of a lot more dangerous to individual thought than George Bush or a handful of Nazi skinheads will ever be. (Ben)

RORSCHACH

Remain Sedate, lp

Vermiform, PO Box 1145 Cooper St, New York NY 10276

Rorschach's bleak view of the world finds expression in the primal rage of hardcore's savage fury, a dozen songs of anger and angst directed at a variety of societal evils, everything from the Holocaust to our health care system. They've tightened up and matured into an impressive war machine - guitars, percussion, and vocals uniting in a blitzkrieg on the listener's psyche, all couched in the familiar sound of NY style hardcore. But it's a one-dimensional attack all the same, every song expressing the same furor, everything played at the same tempo, and after a while, it all winds up sounding pretty much the same. (Jim)

REDNECKS IN PAIN

"The Tribal Dance Sequence Of The Yippin' Noo" EP
Doug Moody Productions

Don't be fooled by the shitty lookin' jacket and stupid title. This 5 song EP proves that punk rock is alive and kicking in

Nashville. This could be compared to both the Minutemen and Nomeansno but it's really not fair, seeing as how this band is pretty unique. This is a great example of a punk band that avoids the beaten path without cheesing out. These guys don't give themselves enough credit, somebody oughta. (Ben)

SKINFLUTES, EP

Lookout

Larry Livermore consistently puts out the best punk records in the country, and this one is no exception. The three songs on this record display a severe rage that the toughest grindcore band will never match. The Skinflutes know the true meaning of hardcore, which has a lot more to do with attitude than with speed. The first two songs kinda sound like the Rhythm Pigs if they were REALLY pissed off, while the third is a rockin' melodic punk song. The lyrics are pretty disappointing, they could be cut off of any band's demo tape, but they're a young band, gotta cut 'em some slack. The question I have is why are all the great young punk bands coming out of Northern California? (Ben)

SLOPPY SECONDS

"Where Eagles Dare"/"Ice Cream Man" 45

Roadkill, PO Box 477175, Chicago IL 60647

This is going to be a big year for Misfits covers, I guess, although Sloppy Seconds doesn't do much to improve "Where Eagles Dare" and unembalming Bobby Steele to sing backup vocals strikes me as much ado about nothing (much like Bobby's sporadic post-Misfits career). Still, the A-side cover is a big improvement over the dopey original they put on the B side. (Jim)

SPANKS

In Your Face

Skyclad

Although The Spanks (who are from Belgium) aren't innovators, they are a really cool, enjoyable band. They mix basic punk riffs handed down from the Damned and TSOL and throw in catchy melodies. This lp, by the way, is a compilation of the band's best work from 1986-89. This is good old-fashioned punk. (Jamie)

URGE...OUTBURST

RPN Records, Lindenweg 13, 4763 Ense 2, Germany

After a lengthy introduction, Urge dish out some uninteresting C.O.C.-influenced metal/punk. All the members are energetic but the tired music is unoriginal and monotonous. (Jamie)

ULTRAMAN

Non-Existence, lp

New Red Archives

The sticker on the front says "colored vinyl" and we all know how rare that is -- better snap this up quick. Semi-hardcore rock that's a little too clean for me. The lyrics are PERSONAL THOUGHTS and PERSONALLY, I THINK they're shit. Being from St. Louis, these guys'll never make it big. Better move to California. (Ben)

WORD MADE FLESH

5-song EP

Squat Or Rot, PO Box 20012, NYC 10009

A squat band (similar to a scum rock band, only they bathe less frequently and usually have to borrow all their equipment) backing up the incandescent, Janis Joplin-on-steroids vocals of Jae Vespoie, formerly known as Jae Monroe of A.P.P.L.E. The girl can wail and it's good to hear her voice again, but I believe the band broke up a while ago. (Jim)

WUSSIES

4-song 7" EP

Headache, 53 Myrtle Ave, Midland Park NJ 07432

Yeah, punk lives! This Seizure-offshoot band knocked me out at ABC No Rio last summer so it's great to see them get vinyl out. Four tunes, all with a catchy Buzzcockian drive, hooks galore, chirpy guitars and infectious vocals. Whoopy! (Jim)

BENEATH THE WHEEL: 4-song compilation 7"
Significant, PO Box 1113, Camp Hill PA 17011

Four cuts by four bands, the first and best, alas, by the now-defunct Separate Peace. God, if only every hardcore band could write hooks like this and spice up the guitar work with so many varied sounds. The positively-emo Admiral and NJ's Greyhouse (featuring Pete Horvath of Sep Peace) both turn in powerful and catchy tunes, while Zone One (Pete and Tom of Moshed Potatoes) do a Kiss cover that's the only real miss on the ep. Look for this one and keep it! (Jim)

CITY OF L.A.: POWER, Compilation lp
Flipside

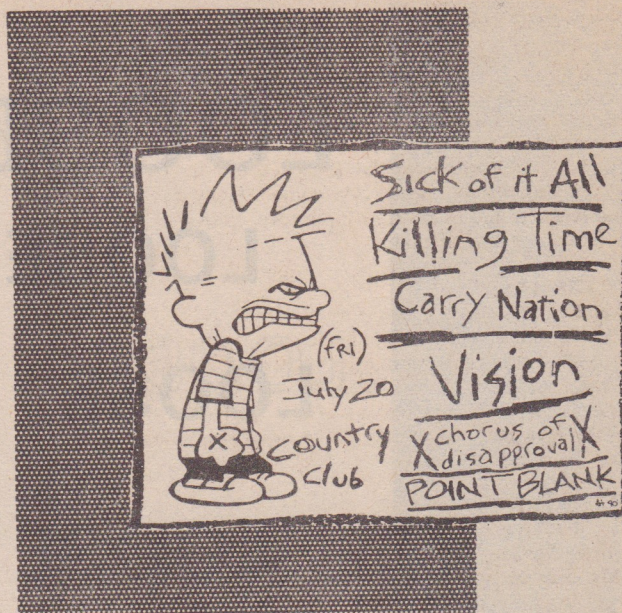
This 10-band picture disc brings us the cream of L.A.'s club scene, circa 1990 - at least according to Flipside. Of the bands here, only Bad Religion (whose "Operation Rescue" is worth the price of this disc alone) and L7 have had much national exposure. The others range from perfunctory bad boy punk (Anus The Menace, Motorcycle Boy), odd-sounding pop bands (Paper Tulips, Creamers), and the theatrical T.V.T.V.S. The whole shebang comes on a one-sided picture disc that looks like an L.A. manhole cover. A guaranteed collectible and one worth listening to for a change. (Jim)

FOREVER: 5 band compilation 7"
Irate, 3229 West Ave, Ocean City NJ 08226

Five NY/HC bands, most associated with the ABC No Rio scene, make for one of the better compilations I've heard lately. Born Against's cut had the most impact on me, although Rorschach's "Checkmate" (from their lp), Citizens Arrest, Burn and Turning Point all sound in fine form - hard, committed, tight, and spewing that clenched-jaw hardcore that Noo Yawk is known for. (Jim)

HARDCORE 1990: East Meets West, 6-band 7" compilation
Nemesis Records

Recorded live at L.A.'s Country Club in July, 1990, the comp brings together three bands from each coast: Vision (best overall track here), Killing Time (who suffer from the worst mix) and Sick Of It All from NJ/NY, and Chorus Of Disapproval (great



catchy SoCal punk), Point Blank, and Carry Nation from California. Query: Why no mail order address on Nemesis' records or in their most recent MRR ads? Just wondering how you're supposed to buy this without one. (Jim)

ONLY THE STRONG: 6-band, 7" compilation
Victory, PO Box 197, Clarendon Hills IL 60514

This record reminds me of the bad ol' days at CBGB when I'd sit through six straightedge bands at a matinee and not be able to tell one set of hooded sweatshirts from the other at the end of the show. Okay if you like this sound, style, and ideology but not for me, thanks. Life Cycle, Face Value, Insight, Confront, Meanstreak, and Integrity are the bands; great photos and lyric inserts (but photos are not identified) and beautiful color sleeve, typical of Victory Records' high standards. (Jim)

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LOOSE LOOSE LOOSE LOOSE



by Wayne Garcia

Some of you out there may remember Pleased Youth. Their Buy Our Records album "Dangerous Choo Choo," though "successful," only hinted at the sound the band had achieved during a few short years. They were great. You had to see them live to see how good they really were; two quality guitarists, an excellent bass-playing front man and a general charisma that most bands would die for. I have to stop here. I'm sounding nostalgic or something.

So Pleased Youth were an excellent band. Shit happens. We move on. Guitarist Paul Decolator, after kicking around in a few bands that never got past that primordial ooze stage, has finally assembled a few band that, shall we say, is making that evolutionary leap from ocean to dry land.

Let me back track a little, history-wise. A year or so ago, before Paul left for a semester's stint in England, he wanted to lay down some tracks for the new songs he had accumulated. He enlisted some friends and ex-band members to help out with the recording. Upon returning from the U.K. to the lovely confines of New Brunswick (I've yet to call it the "Hub City" once in the seven years I've kicked around town), Paul put up some flyers in a local record store to recruit permanent members for a new band. And, voila! Loose.

Paul borrowed the name from the demo project he'd undertaken and Loose gathered material, recorded a demo of their own and lost a guitarist along the road. Then singer Mike Flaherty strapped on a guitar and filled in on lead. All in all, the sound of the band as a four-piece is both stronger and tighter than before.

I saw Loose recently at The Roxy in New Brunswick. They had just played an all-ages affair with some locals bands and a big name band who never showed. Loose has played some of the best gigs I've seen around lately. They're probably one of the most musically articulate bands to emerge 'round these parts in some time. They've got good vocals and a generally tight, kick ass sound. Singer/guitarist Mike Flaherty is something of a cross between the rougher vocals of Peter Searcy (Squirrel Bait, Big Wheel) and the melodic qualities of Glen Tilbrook of Squeeze. Yeah, Mike has listened to Milo of the Descendants as well, but his apparent influences aside, you're not likely to find an 18-year old with the poise that Mike possesses.

You will no doubt recognize some influences in the band's musical style as well, from the droning open chords of Husker Du to the syncopated halts of Squirrel Bait and The Descendants. Loose is hardly given to mimicry, though; unlike so many other bands, they've got the songs to back up the style.

Let me give you their names. Such superlatives deserve recognition (and besides, their moms might wanna cut out this piece.) Paul Decolator plays rhythm guitar, Mike Flaherty is the singer and lead guitarist, Don Bruno (who is exceptionally talented and age 20) plays bass, and John Yursha, also 20, is the drummer.

I met up with Loose one Sunday afternoon. We talked, huddled around my spanking new tape recorder, outside of a little Mexican restaurant where most of the people inside, oddly enough, were speaking Espanol. Don Bruno, keen senses that he has, thought he'd smelled a gas leak above us. We sat under the restaurant's awning and forged on, hoping no one would light a smoke...

Q: As far as songwriting, how does the typical Loose song come about?

Mike: The majority of songs, Paul writes the basic -- all the music and what not. I'll usually do the melody line. Usually the lyrics too.

Paul: Usually, the duties are split between me and Mike as far as coming up with the skeleton of a song, and then everyone just fleshes it out.

Q: Do you generally come up with the music first?

Paul: Yeah, the music and the melody line, then the lyrics.

Q: What's the typical Loose song about?

Mike: It's difficult to say. Usually, I read and the stuff I'm reading will influence what I write. The last time (I wrote a song) things that were on my mind...one person in particular, I observed, that just based their whole life around another in a relationship. The song "God, If Anyone" came out of that. "All The Time," Paul wrote that, was kind of an angst-type song.

Paul: I wouldn't say angst, I'd say it's about a person I know who was at this kind of personal war all the time, with everyone and everything. It gets to be futile after a while, especially when you're getting up in years. That anger that could be channeled into something creative is channeled into cynicism. The song was partly about me because that's how I think I used to be. But it's also about another person who took it to much more of an extreme.

Q: Will you approach recording differently as a four piece?

Mike: For one thing, I'm going to borrow a guitar tuner, so myself and Paul both have one. That'll cut down about ten hours of recording time.

Q: How are things with the band now, member changes and all?

Paul: I think it's more of a solid unit now.

Q: I think things really fell into place.

Paul: I think all four of us share basically similar influences.

Q: Do you think the sound you have now is original?

Mike: I don't know if you'd say "original." There are bands you can compare us to. But we're not going out of our way to hold onto some alternative labeling. We like catchy... We're writing songs we like.

Paul: We don't feel any pressure to come up with something so-called "original."

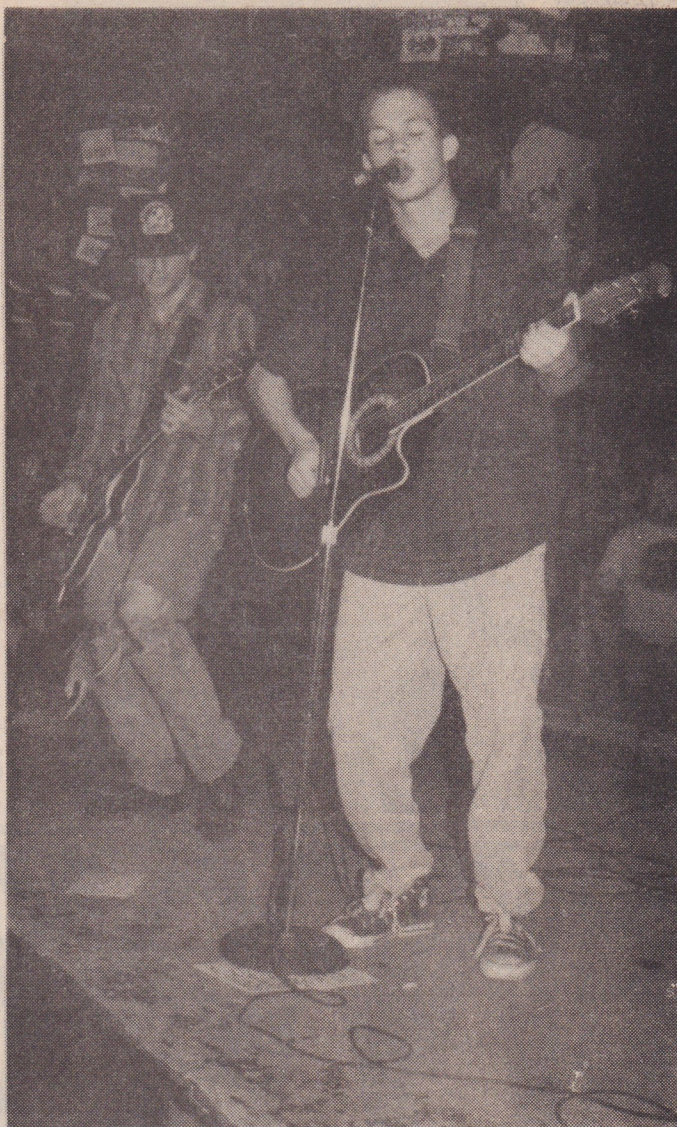
Q: I definitely think it's nearly impossible to do something completely original. One thing I wanted to mention, not as negative criticism, but the songs are catchy and definitely in a pop vein, but maybe they're, I don't know, devoid of hooks? I don't think there's anything wrong with something that takes a few listens to really sink in, because in some ways it sinks in deeper, but...

Paul: The typical pop song has this one hook in it that may as well be a neon sign: "Look, recognize me, I'm a hook!" I think in our songs, the whole song is the hook in itself.

Mike: A friend of mine said, and I take this as a compliment, that our hooks flow really naturally. They're not forced. That type of music (pop) I can really get sick of quickly. I like music that kind of has a groove to it, where the hooks are a little more understated.

Paul: We have a few songs where the whole thing... one part doesn't come out and whack you, I think they're solid all the way through.

Q: I think there are different criteria for a band live and what you would want to hear on a record. Speaking of recording, when was your first demo recorded?



Paul (l.) and Mike, LOOSE

Loose photos by Jim Testa

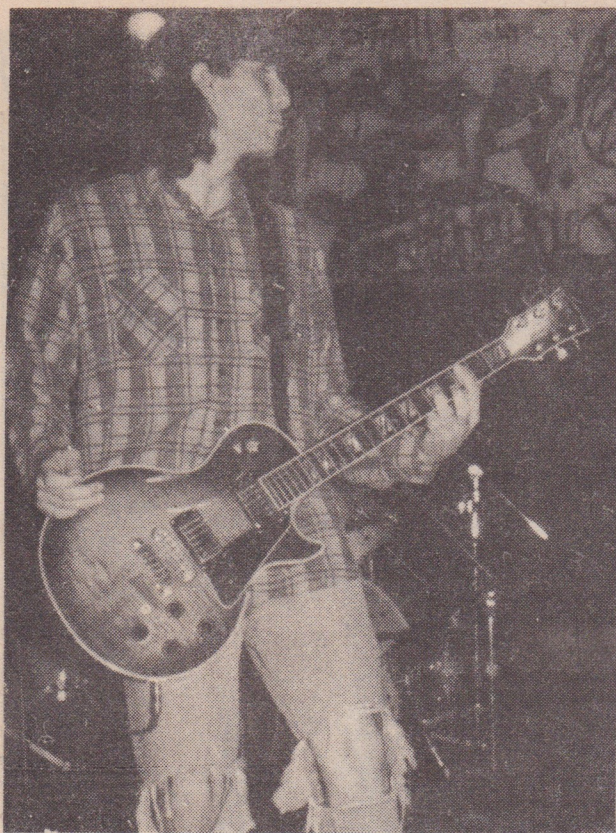
LOOSE

Paul: Really early on, in November '89.

John: We finished the last week of December.

Q: Mike, what are some of your vocal influences? I think you have a voice that sounds natural, rather than trying to sound like someone else.

Mike: It's weird. I've been playing in bands since I was pretty young and we could never find a singer. So eventually I said "fuck it, if you want something done..." One week I just took out the Descendants' ALL tape and learned it. Eventually I was able to stay in key.



Q: Aside from you guys being a tight outfit, I think that's one of the more stronger parts of the band, your vocals are a cut above.

Paul: I think as a band we didn't realize how good Mike's vocals were until we went into the studio.

Q: How about some comments about Don's bass playing?

John: We lucked out.

Q: What about Mike's guitar playing?

John: It sucks.

Paul: I think this'll address the issue of hooks because Mike's leads are more in tune with what we're playing than our previous guitarist.

Q: So what does the future hold for Loose?

Paul: I think next year we'll really establish ourselves. There's one thing we do have going on now, a Buy Our Records soundtrack/compilation. There's also a good chance we'll be touring and next year will hopefully see our first release.

Mike: I think that's one thing we have, one distinction that most bands don't have, and that's patience.

Loose have just finished recording an eight-song demo and are waiting to see what the new year will bring. You can write them c/o Paul Decolator, 207 Commercial Avenue, New Brunswick NJ 08901.

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'CBGB Horror Story' Winner Same As It Ever Was...

Last issue, we wrote an editorial deploring the hideous management of CBGB's, "the birthplace of Punk Rock" - the awful bookings, packing 7 or 8 bands into one night, the ripoff practice of audition "showcases" on Sunday and Monday nights. Just to prove our point, we invited patrons and bands to send us their worst CBGB horror story and promised the winner a lifetime subscription and a t shirt. Well, it turns out we have a winner, but with a twist - his horror story took place 12 years ago. Proving that the more things change, the more they stay the same. If you're a band that's had dealings with CBGB's, see how many details in this story sound familiar. And then write a really nasty letter to Hilly Krystal and tell him to shape up.

- Jim Testa

To understand OUR GREAT BETRAYAL at CBGB's, it is necessary to learn a little about two Midwestern lads, myself and Dirk Bender, uprooted and dragged Eastward in the early and mid-1970's to New Jersey by our families. At a time when adolescence was already creating its own turmoil, we found ourselves largely isolated from those around us in high school. In a land called North Jersey, where half the population had memorized the lyrics to "Sweet Home Alabama" and "Born To Run" while the other half gyrated to Disco, popular culture held little attraction for us; i.e. we weren't real popular. Needless to say, neither one of us made varsity football. Instead, we spent our time drinking Southern Comfort, and listening to Lou Reed, the Kinks, and Roxy Music.

Through Roxy Music, we were exposed to Brian Eno, whom we came to worship. We weren't the only ones; the phrase "Eno Is God" could be found on numerous walls in numerous new music venues in those days. Although Eno and Roxy Music are well known today, in 1976 you could have gone through all of North Jersey and found maybe a dozen people our age who'd heard of them. In a word, we wuz culturally isolated.

Then one warm night in late June of 1976, having just graduated from high school and having for the past year digested issues of Creem magazine, in which Lisa Robinson waxed ecstatic over a place in the Village called CBGB & OMFUG, we ventured into the bowels of Manhattan to Bleeker & Bowery. Of course, back then, the terms "new wave" and "punk rock" had not been invented. We called it "underground rock." On our first night there, we saw Talking Heads and Orchestra Luna, and realized, much like the creatures in one of the early episodes of the Twilight Zone-inspired Night Gallery, that we had found monsters like ourselves.

Over the next two years, we poured our hearts in the club (hearts, dollars, health, and livers, actually). Of course, it was a one-way love. No one shouted "Norm!" when we walked in; no one from the club offered to put us on the guest list once in a while, or slip us a free drink. But we saw Television, we saw the Ramones, we saw Richard Hell and the Void Oids, we saw Robert Gordon and Tuff Darts. In fact, we were so taken with CBGB's that at the end of the magic summer of 1976, we bought musical instruments (me bass, Dirk guitar) so that one day we might approach CBGB's not as the despised bridge and tunnel people, but rather as equals to the dressed-in-black, sleep 'til noon, "I'm on the guest list" crowd that inhabited the club.

By Perry Flynt



THE DISSOLUTES

Photos courtesy of Dirk Bender

I also believe we convinced Talking Heads to listen to Eno, who went on to produce their second and successive albums. Back then, you could actually talk to bands like the Heads, who were still relatively unknown and hung out there (David Byrne could usually be found in the back, playing pinball), and we never stopped pushing Eno's music on them. I know that we convinced a band called The Shirts to listen to Eno, and they liked him so much they wrote a song about him, although they only knew him through his music.

Over the next two years, we practiced our instruments with a few like-minded individuals, including my brother Doug (second guitar) and another high school buddy, Mike (vocals), who, like myself, was away at college eight months of the year. I think our first two songs - learned in the early summer of '77 - were "Suffragette City" and "All Day And All Of The Night," although it might have been "Top Of The Pops" off the Lola album. That may sound cliched now, but hell, this was 1977. Actually, maybe it was cliched back then too, now that I think about it. We never could find an adequate drummer, and we went through a succession of them, like Spinal Tap.

We continued to hang out at CBGB's whenever possible. In fact, Adny Shernoff of the Dictators showed us the correct chords to "Search And Destroy" there, but we were so drunk that we couldn't remember them the next day at rehearsal. While I was away at college in Washington, D.C., irony of ironies, I met and befriended Roddy Frantz (the brother of Talking Head Chris Frantz), who briefly matriculated at my alma mater, American University. Later, in late 1977 or early 1978, Roddy Frantz formed a band called the Urban Verbs. The Verbs were enormously popular in the D.C. "underground," and because of the band's familial connection with Talking Heads, had good connections in New York.

'CBGB Horror Story' Winner

Meanwhile, Dirk and I and our bandmates continued to plug away over the summers and holidays. 1977 became 1978, and along the way, we took the name "The Dissolutes," from a song called "Paw Paw Negro Blowtorch" off Eno's *Here Comes The Warm Jets* album, although my father suggested we call ourselves *The Gang Of Four*, which we immediately shrugged off as "too intellectual."

All the while, we were working towards the payoff - a headliner at CBGB's. By the summer of 1978, we figured we were ready for a gig. We made it onto the bill of an audition showcase. Because we lacked clout, we wound up going on last or next to last, I can't remember which, at about 1 a.m. (Despite our loyal presence at CBGB's, the club had never acknowledged us publicly, although Hilly's ex-wife did come by occasionally to scold us for not buying enough drinks. Hell, as part of the bridge and tunnel crowd, we were probably among the few who actually paid the cover charge and the full price of drinks.)



The Author, circa 1978

We were pretty terrible that night. In fact, we had one song with a bridge that none of us could play, so we'd sort of wind down when we got to it, the instruments dying like bagpipes with the air knocked out of them, and then we'd try to count off until we were back in time with each other. We must've sounded like Iggy Pop trying to get his band back on beat on the *Metallic KO* album; but of course, as five nerds from New Jersey, we lacked the Igster's animalistic appeal to compensate for our lack of musical proficiency. CBGB's did not offer us a regular gig, but did offer to let us back in the club for another free audition.

So we went back to the drawing board. Rehearsed some more, learned some more songs, played a few gigs at various hell holes in New Jersey, survived the theft of our instruments in a situation so stupid they could make it into a movie, except no one would believe it. We set up another CBGB's audition, far enough in advance so that we were given the prime spot on the bill - a 10:30 or 11 pm set. With a newfound confidence in ourselves as musicians, new or rented instruments, and a few gigs under our belt, we awaited our vindication on the stage of CBGB's.

Events overtook us. Shortly before *The Dissolutes'* second CBGB Monday gig, *Urban Verbs* arrived in town to play CBGB's as well. Needless to say, because of their New York connections, the *Urban Verbs* did not need to do a Monday night audition. Instead, they were double-billed the Friday and Saturday nights before our gig with a little-known band called *The B-52's*. We went to see the *Verbs* both nights (paid both nights too, thanks a lot Roddy) and told Roddy that if he were hanging around until Monday, he should check us out. On the Saturday night, the holy one, Eno, actually came to CBGB's to see the *Urban Verbs* perform. I mean, he actually walked past where we were standing, you know?

That Monday evening, as the *Dissolutes* packed and loaded the equipment in preparation for our finest hour, it occurred to me to telephone the club to remind them that we had been promised the prime spot that night. (CBGB's had a way of forgetting these things and shoving you on last, or first, if you didn't constantly remind them.) But when I reached the club by phone, they informed me that maybe we shouldn't bother showing up, because as it turned out, Eno liked the *Urban Verbs* so much that he had booked the club for that night in order to record them, and it didn't like any of the auditions would be starting before 1 a.m., if they went on at all. Just like that, CBGB's had given away our evening because a better offer had come along. Had we not called the club, we would have found out when we walked in the front door with our equipment. They didn't bother calling us.

So we had been betrayed not only by the club and the *Urban Verbs*, but by Eno (who couldn't have known, except that we figured Eno might at least have said, "Gee, Hilly, but what about all these bands that are dying to play here tonight?") The club pretended to be sympathetic. They offered us another opportunity in a few weeks to play there on yet another Monday night audition. Again, they promised us the best spot on the bill. I know what you're thinking -- we should have burned the club down, phoned in a bomb scare, or at least refused the gig and walked away from it. But we didn't have a lot of pride or self-esteem, and besides, we wanted to play CBGB's, so we took them up on the offer.

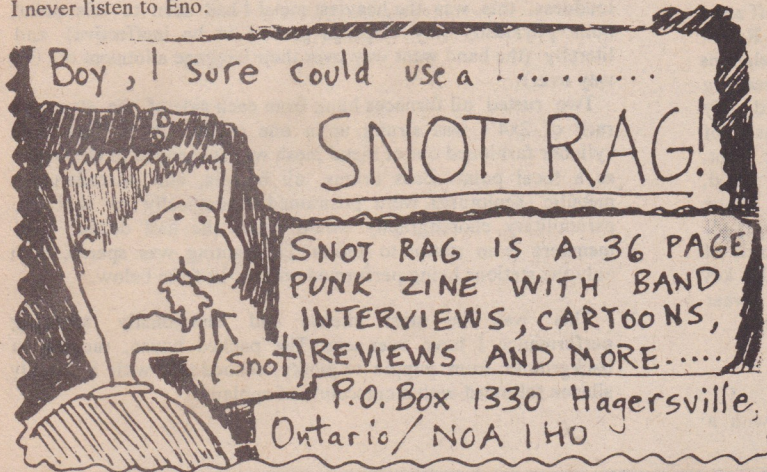
So in a few more weeks, we played CBGB's. And we were good, real good. The bridge in the song that used to trip us up? Child's play, nothing to it: a rolling drum solo into a silent four count and then right back in with the power chords; Pete Townsend, look out. Only about half the songs were ours, but the crowd cheered us on. We felt like Sally Fields on Oscar night: "You like me, you really like me!" Sure, we were the third band that night to do "Search And Destroy," but hey, it was 1978, and that's what you did back then, and anyway, because my bass teacher had taught me the bass line that no one in the other bands ever bothered to learn. At the end of the evening, knowing that with our performance we had earned a coveted opening gig on a real night, with an honest to goodness listing in the *Village Voice*, we approached the club, in the shape of their incredibly long-haired, full-bearded sound man (he used to leave beard hairs in the microphones during sound checks, really gross; when he walked by, we'd roll our eyes heavenward and whisper, "It's Jesus, I'm saved!") to see about a real PAYING gig at CBGB's. His response was, "You guys played too many covers."

It was a lot like the scene in *Key Largo* when Edward G. Robinson makes Lauren Bacall sing for a shot of whiskey (in the movie, she's a lush who used to be a great nightclub singer) and then after she obliges him with a pathetic rendition, refuses her the drink with the words, "Nah, you sung lousy." In the movie, Humphrey Bogart gives her a drink anyway, but no one at CB's ever offered us a drink.

CBGB Horror Story

Anyway, our singer responded to the soundman with "Fuck you" and we all got back in our cars and drove back to New Jersey. The band broke up at the end of the summer, although Dirk and I reformed it with different personnel as Thin Red Line. We never tried to play CBGB's again.

As it turned out, Dirk and I eventually wound our way back into the middle class; we graduated college, got married, found good jobs, and today, 12 years after our debut at CBGB's, we worry about our 401K's and when to have kids, and where the housing market is going. The Urban Verbs turned out to be a flash in the pan, so highly strung that they were destroyed by one bad review, the first one they'd ever received. We still listen to live music once in a while, but we don't go to CBGB's anymore. And I never listen to Eno.



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By Ben Weasel

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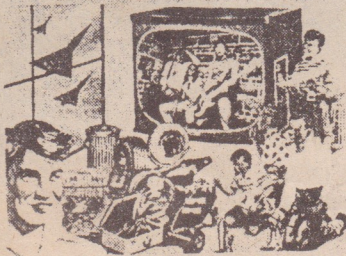
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catchy pop-punk. A Priori rock
out, and Separate Peace make
their debut a winner.

SHREDDER

RECORDS

Fear & Loathing In Quebec

Or, We're All Bozos On This Bus

by Shawn Scallen

The New Music America Festival began in New York City. A small festival was held in the summer of 1979. Laurie Anderson, Philip Glass, Robert Ashley, and others performed. From there the idea took off and did the rounds of the U.S. - Minneapolis, San Francisco, Chicago, Washington, Hartford... Finally the "America" notion of the title was fulfilled as the festival ventured beyond the 49th Parallel up to Montreal, Quebec, Canada, from October 29 - November 11, 1990.

Organizational problems were prevalent as my friend Jeff and I (who were reviewing/photographing the festival for Reflex Magazine) were royally fucked around by the public relations staff. First off, we weren't accredited; then, of the three big shows (Test Department, Residents, Neubauten) we would only be allowed to attend the Residents show. We were accused of being freeloaders, and when we showed up for the Test Dept. show and tried to explain why we were there, we were asked, "What have you done for US?" Hours were spent on the phone and fax, tempers flared, but we finally managed to check out all three shows, giving in and paying for only one of them. Lack of communication, professionalism, and organization were the key elements involved. Here's the condensed version of what happened, concentrating on the music and not my frustration...

Thursday, November 7
7:30 PM - The Spectrum

Great Britain's Test Department started the weekend with a bang, and a crash, and a crunch.

The show, a world premiere entitled Pax Britannica, was a sobering and impacting look at the history of British imperialism, uncovering "the myths and deceptions that have fed the dreams of an entire nation." Combining the traditional (bagpipes, horns, drums, didgeridoos) and less traditional (rusted oil furnaces, grates, police riot gear, two-by-four constructions), Test Dept. created an aural sculpture equaled only by the show's visual element - three giant screens upon which were projected images of imperialist dogma: Thatcher, Falklands, Exxon, Hussein, etc.

Quiet at times, but overshadowed with an overall sense of loudness, this was the heaviest metal I had seen to this point, both physically (my earplugs proved to be ineffective) and literally (the band went way over their baggage allotment on the way over).

Two rusted oil furnaces hung from each side of the stage. A rack of 2x4's was strung up in one corner. A 10 foot wide cylinder fashioned out of metal mesh was suspended in the center as a focal point. Bass drums, oil barrels, and miscellaneous metallic sculptures were positioned strategically so that the paramilitary choreography would rotate the half dozen band members from station to station. The lighting was sparse, with only the stations being performed on spot-lit from below.

This was the most intense and emotionally arresting performance I have ever seen. The packed house, ranging in background from yuppie to punky, echoed this with a deathly silence followed with a crescendo of applause.



RESIDENTS

Photo by Shawn Scallen

Although it would have been worth the \$25, I found myself cursing the pseudo-politically correct band and the festival for allowing such an outrageous ticket price. My faith in the band was restored after the set, however, seeing friends of theirs selling t-shirts outside the venue for a reasonable price, scamming the venue and the festival out of their cut. No time to get a shirt, we run to the bus depot, flagging down the 11 pm bus back to Ottawa.

Saturday, November 10
12 Noon - My house, Ottawa

I get a call from Jeff, who saw the Residents' performance last night. Adjectives like "amazing," "bizarre," and "colorful" pop up in our conversation. He advises me to jump on a bus and check tonight's show out. I'm hesitant. Buffalo Tom are playing in Ottawa tonight. Jeff is relentless. "Buy some color film and go!" he orders. Okay, I give in.

5 PM - A car, somewhere in Ottawa

I get a ride to the show with a Dead Head friend of mine whom I'll call Tony. Still in Ottawa, he's already peaking on how cool this show is going to be, how it will be the ultimate audio/visual experience, with or without mind-altering substances. Hmm, the hype builds.

7:30 PM - The Spectrum, Montreal

I'm not too familiar with the Residents. I've heard some of their stuff and kind of grasp the concept of their masked "Theory Of Obscurity."

This, their latest show, is called "Cube/E, The History of American Music in 3 E-Z Pieces," a three-act cabaret.

The first act, "Buckaroo Blues," examines country and western music through a series of adaptations from authentic western ballads. A bunch of black-clad figures in exaggerated cowboy hats moan and march around a fake fire, singing songs of heartbreak and despair. Three black-bodystocking'd musicians plunk away at synthesizers, drum pads, and a computer sidestage.

Act Two, entitled "Black Barry," portrays the influence of black music, from early American folk songs and blues to gospel and voodoo. The choreography livened up quite a bit. The costumes, lighting, and backdrop are equally more colorful. The set climaxed with the vocalist transforming into a 15-foot high cube-headed Christ figure.

The final act, "The Rise And Fall Of Elvis, The King," was definitely the most interesting with a narrative skipping back and forth from an old man seated in an easy chair, telling his children the comedic fairy tale of Elvis, to selections from the Residents' latest lp, "The King And I."

I don't know. Maybe this was too high-brow for me and I don't get it, but it just doesn't work. If I wanted to see Elvis covers, I'd go see Dread Zeppelin. Having shot enough photos, I split, cab it to the bus depot, and speed back to Ottawa to see Buffalo Tom.

12:30 AM - Zaphod Beeblebrox (a club in Ottawa)

Argh. Life in the slow lane. Getting back to Ottawa, I am drained from travel. Is there such a thing as Bus Lag?

Performing to a hundred-odd people, Buffalo Tom rage. The sweat factor of the poorly ventilated club makes it feel like a packed house. The band makes up for what they lack in stage presence with a full-out melodic rock 'n roll assault. Hair flies as audience members do a tempered headbang. The music is sweet and driving. Not that original, sticking to the trail laid out by contemporaries Dinosaur Jr., but good just the same. I'll choose good old rock 'n roll over performance art any night.

Sunday, November 11

8:00 PM - The Spectrum, Montreal

Wow, another North American premiere. Actually, I had to pay the \$25 for this show, so it had better be good. I can't pronounce Einstürzende Neubauten, but loosely translated it means

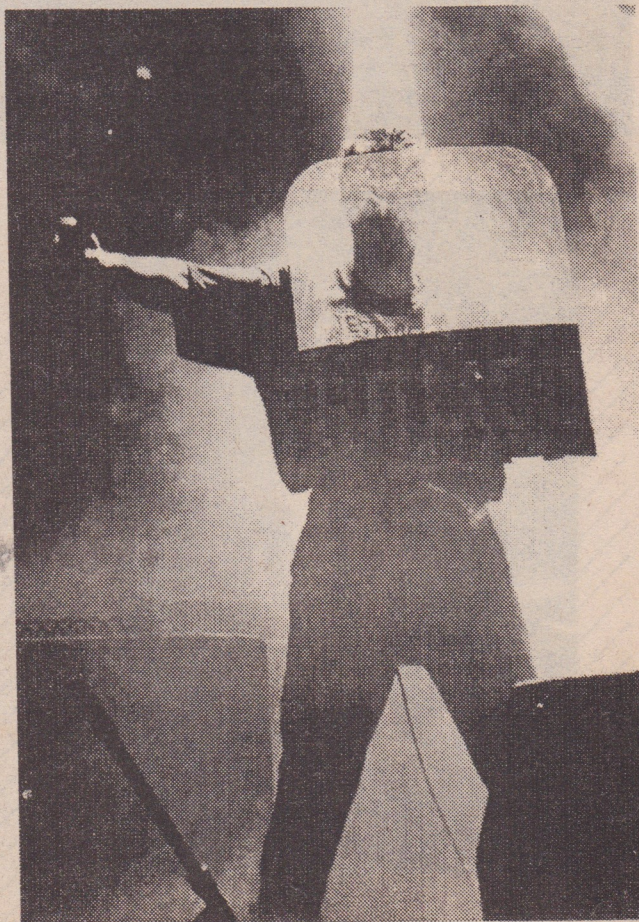
"Collapsing new buildings." Isn't that a Frank Tovey/Fad Gadget song? Anyhow, EN premiere their most recent recording, "Haus de Luge" (House Of Lies).

As with Test Dept., garbage, rubble, and scrap metal play a major role in Neubauten's set. Electric grinders and the world's first electric shopping cart are playing along with the usual elements of rock - the bass and electric guitars. Blixa Bargeld and company collapse the ear canals of the sold-out house with their distinctive pseudo-melodic noise. After an hour, there is a brief intermission to unroll floor mats for the members of Montreal's La La Human Steps dance troupe to fling each other around. Accompanied by Neubauten's "Feurio!," the 10-minute dance piece encapsulates the anarchy and chaos of the music as bodies fly, tumble and are slammed onto the mat. All-Star Wrestling meets ballet, meets five fucked-up German construction workers.

New Music

America '90

It was loud and
weird



TEST DEPARTMENT

Photo by Shawn Scallen



New Music

America '90

Right after the dance, there is another intermission to roll up the mats, then Blixa's boys get back to the destruction.

11 PM - Somewhere in Montreal

GBH and Buffalo Tom are about to hit separate stages at two other venues in town. Fortunately, I have a ride home with Tony and Caroline. Unfortunately, they're a little more burnt than I, and aren't really into more music. We hit a donut shop, then hit the road, two hours of travel and twenty-odd hours of sleep ahead of me.

Saturday, January 12 - Back in Ottawa

Epilogue

Too much music, too many cities, too much travel, too much hassle. I hate Montreal. I haven't been there since New Music America two months ago. I passed up the Pixies, Jane's Addiction, Helmet and the Melvins, GWAR on New Year's Eve, and Agnostic Front, to name a few. The boycott breaks Tuesday when I go back to see Anthrax with Iron Maiden. Hopefully there'll be no flashbacks.

DOUGHBOYS

Photo by Shawn Scallen



BUFFALO TOM

Photo by Shawn Scallen

EINSTURZENDE NEUBAUTEN



Local Stuff

ACTION SWINGERS

"Fear Of A Fucked Up Planet"/"Blowjob," 7"

Primo Scree/Caroline

Self-indulgent noisy jams by three scene vets (Ned Hayden, Don Fleming, Julia Cafritz) who really ought to have better things to do.

- Jim T.

ALICE DONUT

Mule, lp

Alternative Tentacles

If you thought the first two Alice Donut lp's were weird, wait until you get a load of this one. Usually, bands like this follow a predictable progression from noisy weirdness toward more melodic and pop-structured songs (for example, Sonic Youth or Phantom Tollbooth). Alice Donut has always used - or maybe abused - the structures of pop, lulling the listener into a false sense of security. Listen to "New Jersey Exit" from the first lp and you feel like you're rocking with the early Dolls; read the lyrics and you realize that you're listening to a celebration of teenage suicide. Mule is worse. To start with, there's so much high end in this mix that even when I listen to this with headphones, dogs start barking two blocks away. Combine that with Tomas Antona's nails-on-blackboard vocals and you've got the aural equivalent of six cups of black coffee. Just when the music's turned you into a total nervous wreck, it's time to read the lyrics: blasphemy, murder, cockroaches, mutilation, dead end careers, subway crime, all grist for the Donut's sick worldview. Our parents had Hitchcock and Spike Jones; we've got David Lynch and Alice Donut. Just don't ask me if that's progress.

- Jim T.

ANDY BRECKMAN

Don't Get Killed, CD

Gadfly, PO Box 6603, New York NY 10128

Breckman's written for the Letterman show and does a sort of folk singer/stand-up comedy routine. This CD is taken from three different shows and is just Breckman, an acoustic guitar, and his sizable wit. I laughed at loud quite a few times and went back for a few more listens. Very much like Loudon Wainwright style, if Wainwright were Jewish. And while there are a few cuss words on here, there are a couple of fun songs that you new mommies and daddies (or babysitters) could learn that would be perfect to sing to small children.

- Jim T.

CARRY NATION

Carry Nation, lp

Heyday

Electric folk/rock type of thing interspersing violin and flute melodies with a current pop-oriented sound. Cranked-up guitars blend with rich harmonies that tap the band members' classical training. If you can't decipher any of this, compare them to the Velvet Underground. Any band that can manage airplay on WFDU and (God forbid) K-Rock without being cheesy metal has to have a large bag of influences in their music.

- Tom B.

DR. JANET

"Ten Years Gone"/"Starry Eyes," 7"

Ringers Lactate, 21-29 35th St, Astoria NY 11105

Dr. Janet are like the Blind Faith of the 90's. Really. An Amerindie Blind Faith. Take Gary Lee Conner, Ira Kaplan, Matt Sweeney and Lyle Hysen (they of Screaming Trees, Yo La Tengo, Skunk, and Das Damen, respectively), stick 'em in a studio and see what mind-melting noise emerges. "Ten Years Gone" is wah-wahed psychedelia reminiscent of early Screaming

Jim Testa

Trees crossed with Jupiter Eye-era Das Damen. If you're not familiar with those records, suffice it to say it's an amazing trip, heavy sounding with just the right amount of basement noise. Even more amazing is the flip, a cover of The Records' "Starry Eyes," which is a song that can make even the most bubbleheaded girl dance. Dr. Janet do it jukebox justice. A truly great single that deserves to be blared from every stereo and radio station across this great land of ours. Hell, if even the sorority girls understand, shouldn't you?

- Jodi Shapiro

HELMET

Strap It On, lp

Amphetamine Reptile

The pride & joy of the clenched-jaw East Village noise boys at the moment, Helmet certainly delivers when it comes to anguish, angst, and guitars that sound like huge shards of scraping metal. But unlike Sonic Youth - to whom ALL these bands are inevitably compared - the Helmet boys are a glum and humorless bunch (an opinion supported by numerous live appearances), which makes their sturm und drang one-dimensional and finally - in the case of a blistering screamfest like "Rude" - verging on self-parody. What four such good-looking young dudes have to be so angry about is beyond me, anyway. I'd like them a lot better if they'd learn to lighten up a little.

ICONOCLAST

City of Temptation, CD

Fang, Box 652 Stuyvesant Station, NYC 10009

To be honest, I approached this CD with some trepidation. I had seen this duo (Leo Ciesa and Julie Joslyn) play at Lunch For Your Ears last summer and was unimpressed, mainly because Leo had a tendency to overplay on drums all too often. His playing in prog-rock unit Dr. Nerve was equally overdone the two times I saw them live. Surprisingly, this problem is not in evidence here. Julie plays alto sax, often through effects; both her natural tone and electric tone are a bit too indistinct for my demanding taste. Another problem I had was their reliance on a certain formula where the elec. sax provides the central structure while Leo's drumming just noodles around on the sides. Overall, the album is much more subtle than I would have imagined, not very engaging but occasionally interesting.

- Bruce G.

KAREN BLACK

"Alaska"/"Neiborachie," 7"

Vital Music, 81 2nd Ave, New York NY 10003

This avant-weird downtown band provided the first installment of Vital's answer to the Sub Pop Single Of The Month Club, with a grungy scum-rock ode to the 49th State b/w an even stranger, scummier tune on the flip. Although they're something of a cross between John Waters' "Pink Flamingos" and Japanese scifi flicks on stage, there's really not enough going on here musically to interest me much.

- Jim T.

KING CARCASS

Blind, CD

No.6/Rough Trade

Where do they all come from? More cool unknown bands to remind us of how ugly and scary life can be. The information on this CD is purposefully minimal. No personnel listing, and song titles run together; on the cover art, there are four hands with eyes on 'em, bared teeth (or a bat?) at center. Thick slabs of churning guitar warpage, like early Sonic Yoot, and equally twisted vocals, sorta out of the Butthole's Pandora's box. The

handful of sinister, quiet moments are welcome, a couple of distinctly different vocalists at work. There are some really long (ten and 17 mins.) songs, pieces that actually evolve through various moods and sequences, strange for a post-punk unit. What really stands out, besides the effective but oft indecipherable vocals, is that one guitar that consistently is attacked, scraped with the pick, emitting howling, snarling molten tones while the other guitar blasts away, providing the structure. Who are these guys? It's time to find out.

- Bruce G.

MONSTER MAGNET

"Murder"/"Tractor," 7"

Primo Scree/Caroline

Without the benefit of their psychedelic light show, Monster Magnet's murky acid-washed grunge tends to plod a bit; I never much liked Acid Rock anyway, especially the Vanilla Fudge.

- Jim T.

ORIGINAL SINS

Self Destruct, lp

Psonik

All the usual energy, but the sense of urgency seems missing, so I'm 50/50 on this. Their "Higher" lp bugged the hell out of me, but "Nowhere To Go" said a lot about feelings... Maybe I just liked "She's Just 14" from a few years ago better. I saw these guys live once and liked it better than this vinyl. One gripe: The cover shows some lead singer J.T. about to shoot himself in the head. I have no gripe with that, but with a bb pistol? Let's have a little respect for us gun enthusiasts and pay attention to details!

- Tom B.

RITUAL TENSION

Expelled, lp

Independent Label Alliance

Ritual Tension belonged to the first post-Sonic Youth generation of Lower East Side noise bands, but these cuts - which I suspect have been sitting on a shelf somewhere for some time - sound almost quaint compared to today's rabid grunge units like Helmet and Cop Shoot Cop. Without anything truly progressive or innovative in the music or lyrics, what you're left with is a style that's as passe as black jeans and wayfarers and songs that lack any real bite. I'll pass.

- Jim T.

SAFE AS HOUSES

The Moon Belongs To Rachel, 4-song ep

Mountain, PO Box 911, Highstown, NJ 08520

The title track is the best bet here, a melodic pop song that won't bother you while it's playing, although it's unlikely to inspire anything more than casual interest. The second cut has a Police influence that I don't much care for, and the third track suggests this band should really stay away from uptempo punk. The fourth track is just an instrumental remix of "Rachel."

- Jim T.

SURGERY

Nationwide, lp

Amphetamine Reptile

A semi-rough noise thing that you can shuffle but definitely not dance to. Sean McDonnell's vocals build up to a would-be explosion as he's backed up by a good bass beat. One or two cuts reminded me of some stuff on Black Flag's Loose Nut album.

- Tom B.

TOASTERS

This Gun For Hire, lp

Moon, PO Box 1412 Cooper Sta., New York NY 10276

Once before, I'd written in a review that it would be best if bands broke up before they released something that even makes you look down on their better stuff. And this new lp is like that. Gone thru many a member change, the Toasters' live show has stunk for a while now, and this lp is pretty poor too. Ska? No,



DEAN WEEN

Photo by Jim Testa

not too much at all, and the new singer, Cashew, sounds like Michael Jackson (at age 12) sometimes. "Roseanne" sounds like Technotronic or something, while the best tune is a live version of "East Side Beat" from their Skaboom lp. Maybe three ok songs here, the rest...

- Tom A.

WEEN

God Ween Satan: The Oneness, CD/double-lp
Twin/Tone

A little over a year ago, I ran into Mickey Melchiondo aka Dean Ween and he announced that Twin/Tone had signed Ween for a double-album. Yeah, right, I said, when pigs fly. Well, here it is, and brush my teeth and call me Boognish if it isn't Ween in all their loony Ween-ness. Everyone I know who loves this already loves Ween, and that pretty much includes me; I can't imagine what someone who's never seen the band will think of all these silly 2-minute bent-edge tunes with weird titles like "Nippy Niffle" and a vocalist who sounds like 26 different people. Tons of weird guitar and vocal effects and great production by Rollins Band's Andrew Weiss may make this de rigueur headphone music, now that you can find good cheap pot again.

- Jim T.

THE WILSONS

4-song EP

Sparta Productions, Box 7728, Rutherford NJ 07073

New wave pop in a style that spawned a few one-hit wonders on MTV (The Vapors, Romantics) and used to be really popular with college girls out in the Jersey 'burbs, like at the Dirt Club. For all I know, college girls still go crazy for this stuff. "Traces" seems the best bet here for some college radio play, but the too-fast, stab at power-pop, "A Man's Gotta Do...", is a Must-To-Avoid.

- Jim T.

W.O.O.

Telescope, CD

Vital Music, 81 2nd Avenue, New York NY 10003

Experimental, avant-garde, improvisational, call it what you will... I like the guys at Vital Music a lot, but not enough to listen to this ever again. Guitar, bass, sax and vocals, 21 tracks, and not one I'd call music.

- Jim T.

COMPILATIONS

HOLIER THAN SEATTLE, 7"

Heat Blast, PO Box 491, Eatontown NJ 07724

This four-band 7" compilation lives up to its title, presenting four local combos who spew out the same sort of ear-damaging grunge as their better-known contemporaries on Sub-Pop. Big Nurse and Nude Swirl are already fairly well known and you may

have heard their songs on their demo and lp, respectively. The big news is the debut of Freak Theater, a bluesy rock'n'roll powerhouse who reminds me of the Skulls, and Glue-neck, with a similar sound at a little slower tempo. This is way cool, check it out.

- Jim T.

NEW YORK SKA LIVE

Moon

Recorded live at the Cat Club early last year, this shows that an alive and well ska scene still exists in New York. The instruments are mixed a bit low, but it's good sound quality. All the bands are well represented and the comp even presents some newer bands without too much of the better-known Toasters and Citizens. Seven bands, all with two songs each except the above-mentioned (the CD has more). I was at this show and I can say they did a great job capturing the energy of the bands and crowd. Get this!

- Tom A.

Singles

27 VARIOUS

"Granny Smith"/"E Too D" 7"

Susstones, Box 6425, Minneapolis MN 55406

The A side is a slow ballad, not a good idea given Ed Ackerson's vocal style. The B side is better, a blues shouter and the second best Small Faces cover I can recall.

- Jim T.

ARTLESS

"Beer Is Better Than Girls Are," 7"

Vinyl Communications, Box 8623, Chula Vista CA 92012

You know those t-shirts that list the 12 reasons why a beer is better than a girl that you always see in catalogs and wonder who the hell would be dumb enough to buy, let alone wear? Well, Mykel Board's Artless has adapted them as a personal creed. If this is supposed to be funny or ironic, I guess I'm just not smart enough to get the joke... Nah, that's not it.

- Sal C.

BARNEY LOVE TAPES

"You Don't Monitor The Rooms, Do You?" 7"

Vinyl Communications

Another joke I came in late on, I suppose. For the colored vinyl completist in us all.

- Sal C.

BLUTO'S REVENGE

"Slammed" 7"

Synthetic, Box 609478, Cleveland OH 44109

First of all, a big raspberry for packing a 7" EP to look like a 10". The band is one of those garage punk bands that bored college kids are always starting. Pretty basic punk but no heart whatsoever. BR's attempts at humor ("You Broke My Heart, I Broke Your Face") fizzle and it seems like they said, "Hey, let's get a punk band together and give it a goofy name and play parties and shit," and then realized that they'd have to write songs.

- Ben W.

CYNICS

"I Don't Need You"/"Girl, You're On My Mind" 7"

Get Hip, PO Box 666, Canonsburg PA 15317

The Cynics make great singles and this one's no exception. If you like full-throttle 60's style garage rock, then find this 45 and anything else by The Cynics you can, dig?

- Jim T.



GOD'S ACRE

Photo by Jim Testa

GOD'S ACRE/GREEN MAGNET SCHOOL

3-Song EP

Toxic Shock, Box 43787, Tucson AZ 85733

This split 7" gives two cool bands a chance to show their stuff. God's Acre has seen graduated to WaxTrax, but "No One Else" here find them in fine form, Pete's manic lead vocal even more possessed than usual, his guitar fired up and belching toxic fumes. There's also a short excerpt of the band spazzing out on the Stooges' "Funhouse." The flip has Green Magnet School from Framingham, Mass., doing their Sonic noise spew, a tasty sample for all you guitar nuts out there.

- Jim T.

GOD BULLIES

"Join Satan's Army," double-7"

Amphetamine Reptile

Four songs, only one original. But they do pay homage to Link Wray, Terry Jacks, and Hot Chocolate, sacrificing a song from each to his bad self, Lucifer. Thick, mean, and lo-fi, televangelist samples laced throughout, growling vocals. You could do worse than to pick this one up.

- Jodi S.

HELLCATS FROM OUTER SPACE

The Possession of Dr Zachary Smith EP

Classy, % J. Masters, Box 1149, Melrose MA 02176

Bob Cenci once wrote great songs in Boston's Jerry's Kids. Not he calls himself Rockin' Bob Bluetop and writes horrible rockabilly/heavy metal songs in this band. While the Lost In Space angle is neat, this record is the pits. It's a "concept" record of sorts which is bad enough to begin with. Move on to the music and you won't believe your ears. How shit like this ever passes as "alternative" is beyond me.

- Ben W.

HESTER PRYNE

8-song Double 7" EP

Flush, PO Box 1050, Richmond CA 94802

After years of cool cassette compilations, Flush Records goes to vinyl with this 8 song EP (on two 7-inches) by Port Orchard, Washington's Hester Pryne. The band seems caught in a stylistic warp, unsure of whether they're a grungy guitar band ala' Amphetamine Reptile, a faster-than-light hardcore unit, or some prog-rock combo with Rob Halford-type metal vocals out to conquer the Top 20. Diversity counts for something, I guess, but all eight songs could've been mixed a little heavier for my tastes. Produced by All's Bill Stevenson and Stephen Egerton, who get a lot of work as producers despite the fact that most All records sound like shit. I dunno.

- Jim T.

JACK SCRATCH

"Candy From A Stranger," 4-song Double-7" EP

PO Box 146702, Chicago IL 60614

Another double 7-inch, this time from Chicagoans Jack Scratch. The style is cheeseey retro-70's rock, a little too lite to qualify as metal and a little too heavy to be called pop. "Promises" is the best cut here. A minor league Cheap Trick might describe it best.

- Jim T.

KING KONG

"Bring It On," 7" EP

Trash Flow/Homestead

Pretty cool surf rock. By surf rock, I mean like a surfin' backbeat and bass. A tad slow for surfing and vocals are a bit monotone, but this one's a grower. "The Boy" is an epic tale about a boy, natch. "The Man" is a little faster, not really about a man but hey, what's in a name? The best cut, too. "Birdy Song" is more instrumental strangeness. Check it out for a welcome change from slam/bam music.

- Jodi S.

LEFT NUT

"Jumbo Cantaloupes" 7"

Classy, PO Box 1149, Melrose MA 02176

Catchy punk with just the proper amount of dirt under its fingernails. "Burned Black" slams with reckless abandon, threatening to collapse right before the chorus kicks back in. And "Everything It Takes To Be An Asshole" is the sort of drunken kiss-off that Paul Westerberg might have written 6 or 7 years ago in a drunken stupor and forgot about the morning after. Luckily, these guys have better memories.

- Sal C.

MOVING TARGETS

"Away From Me" 3 song EP

Taang

Why would Kenny Chambers walk away from Bullet Lavolta just when the band threatened to break out big-time, to return to the relatively unknown Moving Targets? Targets is Kenny's band, where he calls the shots and sings. And given the luscious groove of "Away From Me," so similar to Lavolta's best melodies (but without the double-guitar metal heaviness), you have to know he's going to be missed. All three songs here have great melodies and chord changes, with a definite Mission Of Burma sound to the guitars and rhythms. Great stuff, now if they'd only tour!

- Jim T.

NIRVANA

"Sliver"/"Dive"

Sub Pop

Nirvana rule, and this single proves why. "Sliver" is the shoulda-been-a-hit for 1990 for these guys; hell, don't let Z-Scum Hundred get their mitts on this, 'cos they'll just play the shit out of it. Poppy enough to hum, rockin' enough not to be wimpy. "Dive" is all grunge, somewhere beneath the sludge lurks a hook.

- Jodi S.

PARASITES

"Where The Kids Are" 7" EP

Box 234, Livingston NJ 07039

If I hadn't already known what the Parasites sounded like, I would have thought they were into the big anthemic punk thing, with song titles like "United Punks Of America" and "Where The Kids Are." But their sound reminds me of a lite Ramones/Blisters thingamajig. Side 1 (studio stuff) suffers because the vocals have no bite or power, and from that, everything else falls apart. But on side 2, recorded live over WFMU radio, the singing brings The Jam to mind and things get going. Limited to 500 copies.

- Tom A.

PLUCK THEATER

"Vulgaria"/"Just Another Scene" 7"

Arf! Arf!, Box 860, E. Dennis MA 02641

Intelligent lyrics (printed for your convenience and/or spelling reference) with a cool tune to boot. REM comparisons are inevitable but where the Georgia peachfuzz go jingle-jangle, Pluck Theater add a dash of rockin'. If you like Friction Wheel and Drumming On Glass, you'll dig this. I like it.

- Jodi S.

POISON IDEA

"Taken By Surprise"/"We Got The Beat" 7"

Sub Pop

Along with Tad, Poison Idea sports the most tonnage I've ever seen in a band. Of course, both bands make heavy music as well, so all's ok. (But don't think they sound like one another!) "Taken By Surprise" is straight ahead, 1-2-Fuck-You type punk, nice and fast. The flip is a side-splitting cover of the Go Go's. Maybe they were drunk. Maybe it was a dare. Maybe... aw, fuck. It's great, and I'm glad they did it. Piss off that teenybopper next door and play it loud!

- Jodi S.

PRISONSHAKE

"Almost Christmas"/"Hell Hell Hell," 7"

Scat, Box 14116, Cleveland OH 44114

I love Prisonshake, no question. This little beauty comes with Scat's quarterly mag, SEVEN. The band itself says that this 7" is "sorta like the slower stuff on the cassette of the multi-format thing, but not really." I guess they're talking about "Almost Christmas." They also wryly describe it as "trying to get on 4AD...Dead Can Far." "Hell..." is coolin' rockabilly the way it should be done. Another reason (as if you really needed one) to love these guys.

- Jodi S.

Singles

POSTER CHILDREN

"Thinner, Stronger"/"Pointed Stick" 7"

Sub Pop

I like these guys a lot, they play hard but still write cool tunes. Excellent 4AD-ish sleeve and candy-pink vinyl lead you to believe it's all sweetness and light, but "Thinner, Stronger" burns and smokes at breakneck speed, with deep bass and crashing drums. "Pointed Stick" is a little less speedy but no less amazing. Hard to describe and I won't bother as long as you snag this sucker.

- Jodi S.

ROTGUT

4-song 7" EP

Potty Queen, 4721 Larchwood, Philadelphia PA 19143

Totally rockin' 70's guitar muck, not an uncommon sound around South Jersey and Philly what with Dr. Bombay and the Rave Records crew. Four hot tunes here, all pretty much the same tempo and style, and all grade a.

- Jim T.

TAD

"Jack Pepsi"/"Plague Years," 7"

Sub Pop

Tad, the second heaviest man in rock (Charlie from Poison Idea being the heaviest) makes heavy rock nonetheless. Tad and company grind, hack and pummel their way through songs like it warn't no thing at all. And it ain't. "Jack Pepsi" is mean, snarling, and downright nasty. Rubbery bass and relentlessly grinding guitars make this an instant classic (Coke?). "Plague Years" is a total 180 degree turn for these guys. It's melodic! Pretty! Dare I say it's poppy? This baits you for the upcoming Tad lp as well as another 7" in the works, "Pig Iron" / "Jinx," that's just as rockin' as this one.

- Jodi S.

TITWRENCH

"Go Back To Europe," 7"

Vinyl Communications

Another full package by Vinyl Communications. This one on lovely purple vinyl with a big glossy foldout, etc. Lots of hate and anger are conveyed through quick, simple song structures, but overlapped with electronic samplings, "general annoyance," and everything in between. Unique lyric subjects, like the title track and "People Like That Should Be Spayed," with lines that will push some people over the edge but are just plain funny. 3 songs. A+ punk.

- Ben W.

UNCLE TUPELO

"I Got Drunk"/"Sin City"

Rockville

"I Got Drunk" was Uncle Tupelo's first song and, according to their presskit, a frequent audience request, so they put it on this seven-inch as a thank you to their fans. Good idea. It's a cool tune, countryish but not maudlin or corny, catchy and funny. More impressively, the band does ample justice to the Gram Parsons' cover "Sin City" on the flip.

- Jim T.

ZU ZU'S PETALS

"Babblin' Mules"/"Shipwrecked" 7"

Susstones

All-gal trio from Minneapolis who revel in a sort of inspired amateurishness. If that sounds like the Shags, well... conceptually, at least, you're in the right Twindome. Our Twin Cities correspondent Mr DeRogatis reports these ladies are hot shit on their home turf but this left me unimpressed.

- Jim T.



Photo by Jim Testa

POSTER CHILDREN

DIARY OF A ROCK CRITTER

a beginner's guide to clubland by jim testa

VACANT LOT/THE DWARVES, Friday, October 19 - Maxwell's. Amazing, the power of a plain old garage band to get the juices flowing. After a long week that had left me brain dead and bone weary, The Vacant Lot's power-punk rock n roll recharged my batteries like a six-pack of Jolt Cola. The pedigree of a garage band is its covers, and these guys got good taste like you wouldn't believe -- "Let Me Take Your Photograph" by The Speedies (NY powerpop, circa 1979, and wonderfully fitting for the night, since the Speedies' late manager lived in an apartment above Maxwell's) and "All Kindsa Girls" by the Real Kids. The Vacant Lot's originals generate the same electric buzz as the first Ramones album - tuneful and 60's influenced without sounding much like anything old. Gotta see them again.

Okay, so you want to hear about the Dwarves? Well, it's all true. They come out stark naked, kinda bang around into the crowd, climb up on stage, do 15 minutes of psychedelic noise-thrash, totally trash the stage, and leave. It was kinda fun, I have to admit, although the spectacle of Sam Evac and John Lisa headbanging to orgasm in the "pit" at Maxwell's was at least as amusing as the three naked mooks on stage (the singer wore a fishnet body stocking). Best line of the night came from Phil Earthpig after the "set," though: "Now at least we know why they're called the Dwarves." Yes, I have naked pictures of the band and no, I won't print them in my fanzine, but the first 5 people who send me a stamped self-addressed envelope and a statement that they're over 21 can get one.

CMJ MUSIC MARATHON - Wed. Oct 24 - Sat. Oct. 27

The good news is that the CMJ Music Marathon is not the New Music Seminar. That's also the bad news. Since CMJ is geared specifically toward college radio, it's a lot less business oriented. You find a lot more talking about MUSIC going on at CMJ, and not as much of the profit-margin mindset, the fat guys in blue suits named Lenny from The Coast smoking cigars and making deals, that tends to dominate NMS. The downside is that CMJ is a lot less well organized than NMS - you don't get the daily newspaper detailing the day's activities (and listing all the last minutes scheduling changes). Everybody I spoke to who was there on a press pass had a hell of a time getting their credentials approved, and the college radio kids who are the meat and potatoes of the convention complained about endless lines and countless snafus during registration. Last year, the Metal Marathon mini-convention was a lot looser and more fun than the CMJ goings-on, but the one Metal panel I attended this year, a press panel on interviews, sucked. Daina Darzan moderated the panel with an iron fist, totally dominating the flow of conversation and running on so long, the panel didn't even take questions from the audience (which is always the best part of these things). Everybody on the panel came from the same background - the mega-buck world of arena rock - and frankly, I'm just not that interested in what it's like backstage in Tokyo with Motley Crue. Besides which, name one glossy metal magazine that isn't written with the same thumb-sucking dopiness as Tiger Beat? Somebody from a good metal fanzine with a perspective on underground rock would have helped this panel a LOT. But that was true of most of the panels -- fanzines and underground press weren't represented on any panel where they might have contributed a valuable perspective except the press panel, moderated (refereed, actually) by Karen Schoemer (who was charming and giddy and wonderfully refreshing). The highlight of this panel (the highlight of CMJ, if you ask me) was Miriam Linna of Kicks fanzine taking some jerk from Rolling

Stone apart at the seams; "people who like music don't read Rolling Stone, rock 'n roll fans don't read Rolling Stone," she said, adding that she's rather read the rantings "of some 16 year old who's spitting all over himself and xeroxing 50 copies of something than what some boring old hack has to say in Rolling Stone." Here here. God, Miriam, will you marry me? Kramer was great - witty, entertaining, and efficient - as moderator of the "Declaration Of Independents" panel, where Tuli Kupferberg represented the wisdom of the ages and Gerard Cosloy added his usual snide (but astute) observations. It was the best overall panel I saw. And Daina, all this panel did was take questions from the audience.

There were a couple of hundred bands playing over four nights and of course I only got to see a handful of them, but here's the buzz I picked up from endless hours of shmoozing: Even though I don't like Bob Mould's new lp, his two shows at The Marquee were reportedly breathtaking, bursting with the energy and emotion that the album is missing. And he even threw in one old Husker Du tune and a cover of "Surrender." Oddly enough, that's the same song Naked Raygun ended their set with at Maxwells, in the loosest, funniest, and most entertaining set I've ever seen by this band. Raygun usually come out and careen thru their set like a race car with its eye focused on the finish line, but this time they took the crowd out for a joy ride. It was "Danger Request" night - the band took requests, but if you picked a song they didn't want to play, you had to pay a penalty. People in the crowd who had the misfortune of yelling out "Suspect Device" or "Whipping Post" were forced to wear silly paper mustaches or drink a shot of some hideous rotgut whiskey the band had with them. The songs they did deign to perform were flawless - it's as if the band has found its second wind. They did Buzzcock covers and "Chinese Rocks" and songs from all their lps. Wow. And the Goo Goo Dolls, who opened, were just as good, frantic and relentless in their power-punk spud rock attack. This may go down as the show of the year. Other stuff I liked: Snatches Of Pink, who won the unenviable opening band slot at CBGB, and look (and sound) something like a cross between Husker Du and David Lee Roth; Rhein Sanction, a very young power trio from Florida, whose sonic attack combined Sub Pop sludge with breakneck hardcore tempos; The Fluid, from Denver, probably the catchiest of the Sub Pop roster and great showmen, even if their high-energy punk rock isn't going to change the world or add anything to the lexicon of Rock.

The Violets opened up the show at Chase on Friday night and put on a pretty good show - from Athens, they have that Rickenbacker twang-pop sound, but with strong, witty songwriting (almost like Too Much Joy), combustible musicianship, and a winning stage presence, they even managed to overcome the goofiest spectacle of the weekend, a club owner who kept running up to the band between every song begging them to turn down so the cops wouldn't come and bust the club. Hey, bub, get a cabaret license already, ok? God's Acre from Chicago vindicated themselves from their self-immolation at Maxwell's during the New Music Seminar with a great set at the Pyramid, another sonic boom trio. Critics who can't see past their hair say Sub Pop but I put them more in the Nice Strong Arm/Steel Pole Bath tub school of psycho-angst pop. And on the same bill, Ween were funny and bizarre and playful and rocking, and Goddamn if Mickey hasn't learned to play guitar like a mofo. I've known Mickey and Aaron for so long, I have to restrain myself from tousling their hair like little kids everytime I see them. Who would've thought those two loony 16 year olds I met six years ago would grow up to be the gods of indie rock?

**SARCASTIC ORGASM/WELL BABIES/ROCK PHONICS/
LUCY BROWN/KAREN BLACK - Friday, November 9, CBGB**

Sarcastic Orgasm take the Barnum & Bailey approach to punk rock - if you don't like the trapeze act in the center ring, maybe you'll like the dancing bears or the clowns. Actually, the circus metaphor doesn't quite cut it, it's more like the Uncle Floyd Show, a whole bunch of silly props and funny outfits, with the band making a lot of noise. Bottom line: There's a difference between wacky & zany and trying really hard to be wacky & zany. The Well Babies from Boston followed, Boston prog-rock that didn't seem very progressive, what with them stealing shamelessly from Yes and The Who. Avoid at all cost. Midway through my third beer (this being one of those interminable CBGB nights that start around 9:30 pm and go til dawn), this waitress comes over and says "People are waiting for the tables, so if you're not gonna drink then you have to move." Now, not only have I already paid for three beers at \$3.75 a pop, but in point of fact nobody was waiting for a table...the place was 1/4 empty, at 11 pm on a Friday night. So just when I'm in a totally pissed off mood at this moron waitress, the Rockphonics come on stage. Problem is, they weren't advertised. Six bands on the bill already and Lunatic Louise adds another one. Shit! Imagine a third-generation no-talent clone of The Blasters and you get an idea of this crew. Note to Louise: For God's sake, don't turn Friday night at the coolest club in NYC into audition night, parading an endless stream of nobodies across the stage til all hours just to try and fill a few more seats. It drives more people away than it brings in.

Well finally, way too late for my taste, Lucy Brown comes on. I'd heard quite a bit about this band and I was impressed by their seeming ability to get booked a helluva lot more often than anybody else in town except the peripatetic Spin Doctors, who play anywhere big enough to hold a mikestand seven nights a week. Anyway, I know I'm in for some funk when the guys pull their shirts off before they even start the set. Suddenly the room fills up with rabid Lucy Brown fans faster than cockroaches jumping on an oreo after lights out. In a minute the place is packed with people - teens, twenties, thirties, black, white, skins, punks, wavers, yuppies - an amazingly diverse throng - and EVERYBODY in the place starts dancing as soon as the music starts. Yeah, it's funk, but it's good, high energy with a lot more rock than the Chili Peppers, vocals that are sung, not rapped. I am impressed.

By now I can hear roosters starting to crow in Queens and there are still three bands to go, so I wait until Karen Black gets their gear on stage and hang around for one song. They are not - as Dave Wilentz had promised - all nude, but wearing weird Japanese scifi costumes, sort of like a Rocky Horror Picture Show version of Godzilla Versus InfraMan. The music sounds familiar, sort of grungy, sloppy punk with dopey lyrics...wait a minute, it's...SCUM ROCK! Boy, wait til Mykel Board gets back and sees this.

BAZOOKA JOE - Saturday afternoon, November 10, ABC No Rio matinee. Bazooka Joe from Myrtle Beach, SC are the guests at this week's moshathon. They do a lot of songs that might be covers because the lyrics sound sort of familiar ("Gary's Got A Boner," "We Got The Beat") but slowed down and rendered totally heavy, sort of 3/4 Sacred Reich mixed with 1/3 Nausea. The anarchists love 'em, the punk kids love 'em, these guys make the densest, loudest, heaviest sludge dirge noize rock on the planet.

SILLY RABBIT/GREEN GRANNY - Friday, November 16, Live Tonight!, Hoboken

If Johnny Rotten was the Anti Christ, then John Mastro is the Anti Cool. Green Granny is the perfect vehicle for him - balding and bespectacled, backed by a male guitarist in a granny grass, reading poetry and bad jokes from a clipboard. God, he has a good time up there. Yet Mastro never quite manages to rise above his image. He always looks like a CPA who wandered onstage at Open Mike night and won't get off. There's a certain



Photo by Jim Testa

MENTAL FLOSS

charm at watching someone work at something they're clearly not suited for, and yet taking such joy in doing it that he manages to win you over too. Smiling, dancing, singing his heart out, occasionally raising his voice to a frenzied scream, John is all of us out there who want so badly to be in a band. The band is both good and endlessly accommodating, putting up with his poetry and jokes without so much as a smirk, and the songs are actually pretty good, tuneful and often witty.

Before they went on, ten people told me "Silly Rabbit are really good, they just sound like Jane's Addiction." Sure enough, they sound like Jane's Addiction, yet they're good enough in their own right to rise above the comparisons. Lots of energy and stage presence. Once the songwriting gels and the band finds its own voice, they'll be worth keeping an eye on.

RULE OF THUMB/DOG TIRED/PHLEG CAMP/ADMIRAL - Saturday, November 24, ABC No Rio matinee

This was one of those weird shows where all the regulars stayed away and each band brought its own crowd. Rule Of Thumb kicked things off with a slightly sloppy but nonetheless endearing set of power pop punk rock, including a goofy Go Go's cover. I should point out that this is Sal Cannestra's band and since he writes for this zine, anything we say should probably be judged accordingly. But they were good, honest. Anyway, once they finished, the Staten Island Crew departed and were replaced by the KPM - the Kearny Punk Mafia - for Dog Tired. This was the Dogs third ABC No Rio appearance but the first time they got to play with an actual working p.a. so it was pretty bitchin' - their usual high energy, acidic moshcore had the crew bouncing off the iron posts that hold the ceiling up. The Kearny kids split soon after Dog Tired finished and were replaced by a bunch of Pennsylvania kids and South Jerseyites who trucked up to see Admiral and Toronto's Phleg Camp. Phleg Camp played first, slightly reminiscent of Soulsides but still original in their own right, with a drummer who had everyone's jaw hanging open, not the least of whom was Rule of Thumb's drummer T.J., who after seeing Phleg Camp said, "I never want to play drums again." The ultimate compliment.) Admiral were up next, something of a surprise. A lot harder and heavier than their emo/straight edge

reputation led me to expect, with a lead singer who was 3/4 Henry Rollins and 1/4 Pee Wee Herman. Sean brings emo to new heights - maybe "psycho" would be a better word than "emo" - with a style that's all writhing, mugging, and full-on emotional intensity. It's a little too much for a lot of folks, but I got into it after a while.

There's a lot to like about ABC No Rio hardcore, especially the total lack of violence, but this scene has developed its own cliques and elitism that's as bad as the bad old days at CBGB. Put Citizen's Arrest or Animal Crackers on the bill and the place is packed and full of moshing maniacs; put four equally good if not better out of town bands there, and the place is near empty, with most of the crowd either hanging out upstairs or standing there with their hands in their pockets. Sad.

MARC EITZEL/FLYING SAUCER/BUFFALO TOM - Friday, December 7, Maxwell's.

Marc Eitzel is the lead singer of American Music Club, a band with a loyal and fervent following, although I've always found them a little too dry and dreary. The band stayed home this tour and Eitzel took to the road for a one-man acoustic version of the show, playing mostly AMC songs and peppering them with a dry wit. The songs still sounded pretty dreary to me, though. Flying Saucer were so nondescript in a new-wavey sort of way that I can't think of anything to say about them, pro or con. They are often lumped in with whatever kind of band Antietam and Love Child are, if that helps, but I like those other two bands a lot more. Buffalo Tom - back in front of 100 people in a room that only holds 200 anyway, even though they're on a major label and have a Rockpool/CMJ Top 10 album out - sort of proved the futility of this major label plundering of indie talent. I like their new record a lot, but it's not the sort of music that's going to catapult them off the college radio charts and into the big money sales charts. They'd probably sell just as many records and tour the same venues if they were still on SST. And if they sounded this damp and uninspiring at Maxwell's, despite some quality songs, what are they going to be like in arenas? Overmatched and outclassed, that's what.

JOHNNY PUKE WEEKEND

Thursday, December 27

My friend Johnny Puke came to visit for the week between Christmas and New Year's, which promised a lot of fun. No sooner does he arrive fresh from South Carolina with a drop dead tan than Mother Nature drops a foot of snow on New Jersey, making our first night together LOTS of fun. Braving the elements, we trudge down to Maxwell's to see SUPERTOUCH and AMERICAN STANDARD. The awful weather doesn't deter the crowd, anyway, since the room nearly sold out. Supertouch play a lot of new material - slower and more angst-ridden than their earlier melodic hardcore stuff, but the band's singer, Mark, really has to become a little more animated or this stuff just isn't going to fly. American Standard's Bill Dolan comes up to me and says, "I just tried to describe Mark's singing to someone who totally isn't into the punk scene and I said he was like a cross between Lou Reed and Henry Rollins." Well, close, Bill. I'd say more like a cross between Rollins and Richard Lewis, the neurotic comedian who keeps grabbing his head and whining about how miserable his life is.

American Standard, on the other hand, rocks. Everytime I see this band, they just sound better -- Matt Dolan's guitar playing has gained an urgency and dynamism that it didn't seem to have before, and when they do "Ace Of Spades" now, they actually do it justice. The rhythm team of Soop on bass and Jay on drums has turned into a machine the equal of the Rollins team for precision and power, and the new songs sound killer. **SOMEBODY SIGN THESE GUYS BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE!**

I manage to survive the cab ride back from Hoboken in the freshly fallen snow and spend half of Friday shoveling the Testa homestead out from under a foot of the heavy white stuff. Friday night, Puke and I head for the Castillo Cultural Center, a friendly space nestled down near the Holland Tunnel, where the ABC No Rio collective has taken refuge for the night. As Johnny reunites with Mike Bullshit and tries to sell fanzines and t-shirts, I check out SUB-ZERO, one of those Italian hahd-caw bands from Lawn Guyland who play a decent set of generic Sick Of It All type NY/HC, complete with a guido lead singer who keeps



BORN AGAINST

Photo by Jim Testa



Photo by Jim Testa

LEEWAY

Diary Of A Rock Critic Continued...

complaining that nobody's dancing. Next up are RORSCHACH, who have finally stabilized their lineup (no more switching guitarists two or three times mid-set) and are sounding huge, massive slabs of power hardcore hammered with breakneck precision. BORN AGAINST, just about to head out west for a short California tour, do a short set, with Sam McPheeters doing his usual breakdance routine all over the floor while the band battered the audience with its power mosh.

Last up, BAD TRIP - whose lead singer was off getting a tan in Florida - play with various members of the audience taking turns on lead vocals. It was the sort of silly in-group horseplay that the No Rio crowd excels at and I had fun watching. The p.a. - which sounded like the one they use at the Port Authority to announce that your bus is leaving - renders all vocals totally incomprehensible, so it didn't matter that no one knew the words. It's the spirit that counts in these things anyway.

Saturday got a little hectic. Mr. Puke was off amusing himself so I first hustle over to Maxwell's, where I try to corral LEEWAY for an interview. I manage to buttonhole guitarist A.J. Novello, but not for very long, since he keeps wandering away to rap with his homeboys. Oh well. So I sprint down Washington St. in the muck of melting slush to catch CROCODILE SHOP, who were opening for Fear Of Falling at Live Tonight!

The typical Live Tonight! audience, for those unfamiliar with the club, consists of lowbrow frat dudes whose knuckles scrape the floor when they walk, accompanied by their party-doll girlfriends. These cretins seem somewhat taken aback by Croc Shop ("look, they're all wearing black clothes, what does THAT mean?" they gasped; or maybe they were just afraid of the smoke machine). Still, the set sounds the best I've heard it, with Mick's vocals taking on a Depeche Mode tonality and the various synths, drum machines, DJ Dennard's scratching, and tape loops all integrating perfectly. Techno-industrial dance pop, I'd guess you'd call it, unless you're a Bon Jovi-loving Live Tonight! Cro-Magnon spudhead, in which case you'd probably just call it weird.

From the sublime to the ridiculous, I catch the 12:10 bus and rocket back up Washington to Maxwell's just in time for Leeway's set. Now what these guys - whose usual venues are 1000 seaters like L'Amour and City Gardens - were doing in a crackerbox like Maxwell's is beyond me, but of course they drew the usual CBGB hardcore dickheads.

It's easy to spot this particular brand of moron; they're the guys who prove how "hard" they are but taking a running start and ramming full-speed into the girls standing up on the risers and on chairs in the club and then call it "slam dancing." Chickenshit cheapshot artists is what they are, and of course the show ended with the inevitable fistfight. Leeway rock, no doubt about that; nobody does the hardcore/metal crossover thing better, retaining the best qualities of both. The band's latest guitarist, Mikey Gibbons, looks and plays like Angus Young, and Eddie the singer still looks 16 although he's gotta be at least 26 by now. The set's about evenly divided between the familiar material from their Born To Expire lp and songs from their new and as-yet-unreleased Desperate Measures album, but all of it's got the same full-throttle intensity and hard rockin' muscle.

I just wish Eddie wouldn't spend half the time telling his "people" to go crazy and then have to tell them to chill out and stop hurting each other. But it's part of the CBGB old school mentality that it's macho to extend the mayhem beyond the pit - if you're there, you're fair game - and until the bands make it clear that people who just want to stand and watch have the right to be left in peace, the assholes will run (and ruin) the show for everybody.

So much for Saturday. Sunday afternoon, Johnny was performing his one-man spoken word shtick at ABC No Rio. We thought it was just going to be him, but it turned out to be an open mike sort of affair, and about a dozen local poets got up and did short bits. I'd never been to one of these poetry things before, so let me fill you in.

What struck me first was that everyone performed anonymously - none of them was introduced, or introduced themselves. You'd think the same ego that compels these people to do this in front of a roomful of strangers would demand that they at least attach their names to their performances.

But then I came to realize that this roomful of strangers was nothing of the sort, that all these poets and readers and performance artists not only knew each other, but met like this all the time, the same small group, reading and reciting their works for each other and a handful of strangers.

So what are they like, these downtown poets? Save me from the self-important Angry Young Men who rant and rave about the same half-dozen topics - poverty, war, injustice, blah blah blah. Give me the 70 year old retired furrier from Queens who reads from his notebook - "when your woman stops ovulating, that's it, brother" - or the crazy Frenchman who writes threatening letters to Paramount and MGM, demanding royalties for the films of Elvis Presley and Jayne Mansfield. Or the soft-spoken, elderly black man from the projects who carried a rock in his pocket for self-defense, and who read a poem about beauty and family.

Johnny - my friend Johnny Puke this is now - gets up to do his thing, and he starts off sort of slow, telling these homey stories about his oddball friends down south and so on. Then he gets into this riff about coming to New York and going to the Port

Authority, and seeing a bum piss right in the middle of the bus station, and how everything in New York City stinks of urine. And right in the middle of this, without missing a beat or dropping a syllable, he pulls down his zipper, whips out his wang, and starts pissing in a bucket.

I was not only surprised, like the rest of the room, I was impressed. Shit, I can't piss if there's just another guy in the men's room with me, and here's Johnny doing it in front of a room full of poets, and ON CUE, yet. Well, he finishes his rap about New York and tells some more funny good ol' boy stories, and then he says, you know, I shouldn't complain about New York, you didn't bring me here, I brought this on myself. And with that, he picks up the bucket of piss and dumps it on his head. Needless to say, the crowd loved it.

Good or bad, funny or boring, what these open-mike poets really prove is that all those tv programs that show those embarrassing home videos and all the Oprahs and Phils and Geraldos on the air don't even scratch the surface when it comes to the deep-seated, psychopathic, and utterly adorable weirdness of the average American.

Albums

8-BARK

Twelve, EP

Underdog, Box 14182, Chicago IL 60614

8-Bark has got to be the stupidest band name ever, but ex-I.D. Under frontman Doug Ward claims it doesn't matter because people will remember it. Whatever. This record is a lot like Doug's old band, lotsa quirky stops and starts and lotsa Doug's Motorhead-type vocals. The main difference is the addition of a female backup singer who creates a nice contrast. Unfortunately, the record suffers from crummy production and while the songs are ok, there's nothing too special about them. It's moody, abstract, but the songs are short and follow some sort of patter so it's definitely not for college kids. About the nicest thing I can say is that it's interesting, but with 8-Bark's determination and constant gigging, they're sure to find their audience.

- Ben W.

BONE ORCHARD

Bonafide, 12" EP

Carrion, 792 Columbus Ave, New York NY 10025

Despite trying to be non judgmental, when I saw Bone Orchard's band photo, I had a good idea what kind of shit this would be. But burn my dingleberries with a soldering iron, I was way off. Imagine the importance guitars played in bands like Husker Du and The Jam and fiddle around with that in a good hard-driving poppish band like Bone Orchard. Though the first side didn't do that much for me, the second side would have made an incredible 7". Even the lyrics on these two songs have a Jam-type feel to them, with great lines that make you just want to give up on trying to do your own band. This has potential that some label should take notice of.

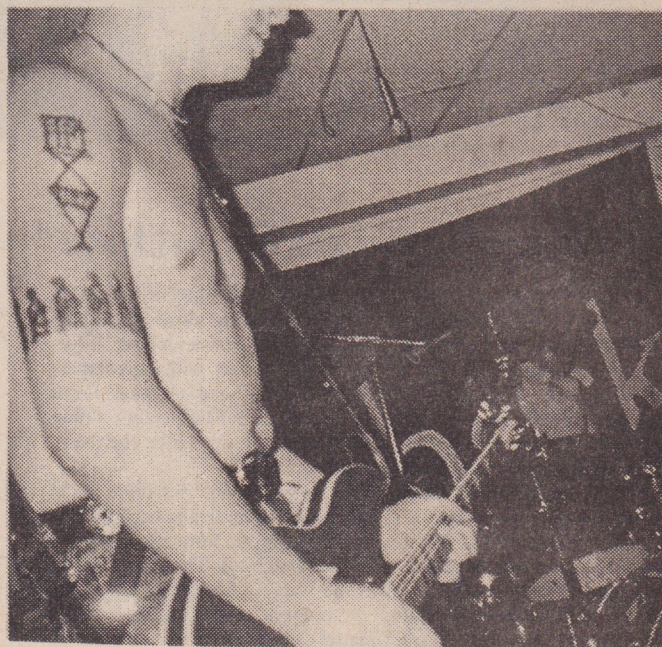
- Ben W.

BUFFALO TOM

Birdbrain, lp

Beggars Banquet

Buffalo Tom's debut on SST found a small but appreciative audience composed mostly of trendy Brit rock critics who drool over anything that sounds remotely like Dinosaur Jr. I liked it but found the entire band (ex-high school bandmates of head Dino J Mascis, no less) so derivative that their promotion to major label status soon after came as a surprise. Still, this record suggests the band might actually be ready for the big time. Combining the raw energy of Husker Du and the thick, layered guitar Mascis guitar sound, Buffalo Tom writes great songs about shattered dreams and broken hearts. These guys do poison-pen love songs almost as well as Bob Mould at his peak, and Tom Magginis can whine



8-BARK

like Neil Young with the best post-modern post-hardcore Post Toasties around. The mix (Mascis co-produced) is great, acoustic guitars dancing on top of a thick sludgy bottom of distortion. In "Enemy," with its martial drums and soaring coda, the band has a song "big" enough to fill arenas in the style of U2, although I didn't think they pulled it off in the relatively tiny confines of Maxwells back in December. Still, I have a feeling that, like the Pixies, their days as a club band are numbered.

- Jim T.

CHURCH OF BETTY

See, Hear, Smell, Touch, Taste, lp

Fang, Box 652, New York NY 10009

With the exception of "Madonna In The South Seas," a song about seeing Madonna t shirts everywhere, nothing found here was memorable. The harmonizing and violin and piano back up might be good, but from an underground rock perspective, ho-hum.

- Tom B.

GENE CLARK
CBS

Gene Clark was the main songwriter and lead singer on the first two Byrds lps. This fact was pretty much ignored when he started his solo career in 1967, since the Byrds' first two hits were covers (of Dylan and Pete Seeger), and the Byrds sound was more determined by vocal harmonies and their unique mix of numerous guitars. Another problem was that Clark's solo lp was released at the same time as the Byrds' *Younger Than Yesterday*, the second of a trilogy of near-perfect, mostly psychedelic and groundbreaking lp's. Hence, the Clark lp was deleted and forgotten pretty quickly. This was sad in more ways than one, but has recently been rectified by CBS.

Although this is probably the shortest full-length CD I own (28 and a half minutes), don't miss it this time around. Personally, I think its original fate had much to do with its overall melancholy voice, lyrics, and sound. Gene had and still has a medium range, world weary voice, darker in feeling than most would expect from an ex-Byrds member. The original title track, "Echoes," is a small epic of serious pop with fine arrangements by a pre-stardom Leon Russell. Gene uses the Byrds' excellent rhythm team to good advantage as well. For those of us in relationships turned sour, this is good balm.

- Bruce G.

CONNELLS
One Simple Word, lp
TVT

The Connells have been here and there for a bit of time now. Their pop/rock flair is soothing and packed with soul. "One Simple Word" offers plenty of simplistic techniques which produce more impact than any bass/gtr/drums thunder from those excessive artists who feel more is more. The Connells are from Raleigh, North Carolina, I believe. Music down there sometimes reflects the easiness and laid back lifestyle created by too much sun. Their sound sometimes falls into the commercial pop mode, but it doesn't happen often and it's best to just skip those cuts and listen to charmers like the lovely ballad "Waiting My Turn," swelling with cello and oboe. Not all of this is gold, but there's enough to keep you interested.

- Debi R.

CHRISTIAN LUNCH
Unreliable Sources, EP
Alternative Tentacles

Does anyone remember M? Well, these folks aren't nearly as catchy. Lame synth rock with none of the brute force needed for this stuff to be really effective.

- Sal C.

DE ARTSEN
Conny Waves With A Shell, lp
Glitterhouse German import

De Arsen is a German band (and before you say, "no duh," ask yourself where Das Damen comes from) that plays Feelies-type pop at a delirious pace, which takes on a hypnotic effect over the course of an album. There's also a Daniel Johnston cover just like Yo La Tengo (except not really). I hope this band doesn't disappear and gets licensed in the U.S. because this debut shows a lot of promise.

- Sal C.

THE DEHUMANIZERS
Go Hollywood, lp
Mystic

A rock opera about the Dehumanizers' experiences with some major label. According to the press packet, it's real funny - I don't know 'cause there's no lyrics. Some of this is ok, but a lot of it reminds me of 70's Rock like The Eagles. "Tipper" uses a "Dust In The Wind" riff and they cover Gary Numan's "Care." Veers into metal occasionally too. Not too bad but nothing to write home about.

- Ben W.



DOUGHBOYS
Happy Accidents, lp
Enigman Canada/Restless
Happy and sappy.

Those two words sum up this album, the third release from this Montreal quartet. As with each of their prior albums, harmonies are the key (everyone does the vocal thing this time around) but this record is a lot less hardcore and a lot more produced than their first two. Slide and acoustic guitarwork seem to outweigh the presence of the Doughboys' patented straightahead power-pop wall of guitars, so the album as a whole has a bluesy/jangly sort of feel. As wimpy as it may be, Happy Accidents shows growth and depth on the band's part, and this is their strongest and most cohesive lineup so far.

Disappointing on the first listen, this album grows on you. By the third or fourth time around, the infectious melodies will have taken their toll and you'll be humming or singing along. I am.

- Shawn S.

DROOGS
Want Something, lp
Skyclad, PO Box 666, Middlesex NJ 08846

A great album on a much-too-obscure label. (When's the last time you picked up a Skyclad platter?) (Editor's note: Sal's right. Support these guys. It's a great local label and they put out tons of cool product that never makes the CMJ charts or sells squat!) Want Something is definitely worth an arduous search. The kind of record that would sound like Nirvana (the place, not the band) playing on the jukebox in your favorite club while you and your 20 closest friends got stoned on multiple gin & tonics. Happy hunting.

- Sal C.

ROKY ERICKSON
Reverend Of Karmic Youth, lp
Skyclad

Fans take note: "all tracks previously unreleased in America" and even some live versions, all good-quality recordings. Ex-13th Floor Elevators frontman Roky sounds rather mellow and

countryish on side one, but is his old self on the more rocking side two, for cuts like "The Interpreter" and "Starry Eyes." He's getting old, but this Texan can still do it credibly. P.S. Ignore the stupid album jacket picture.

- Tom B.

FLOYD BAND

I Burped And Puke Came Out My Nose, lp
Synthetic, Box 09478, Cleveland OH 44109

Although the second side of the lp is better than the first, that isn't saying much. Floyd Band mix Circle Jerks tyupe punk with Dead Milkmen influences and put it all together in one forgettable package. Their kind of music might have been interesting ten years ago but it's all been done before, better.

- Jamie T.

FUZZTONES

Creatures That Time Forgot, lp
Skyclad

A compilation of rare demos, live tapes, interviews, etc dating back to 1982-87 (when the band still lived in NYC) and the psycho-punk revival. I'm too young to recall the 60's but old enough to remember when this type of thing was in during the mid-80's resurgence... Good for collectors, and it's on clear blue vinyl too.

- Tom B.

GANG GREEN

Greatest Hits, CD
Taang

Gang Green has never impressed me. They're a beer-drinking bar band from Boston, with themes lamer than Miller Life commercials. The tightest song on here is "Alcohol," in which singer Chris Doherty states "I'd rather drink than fuck." I like to drink, then fuck, or fuck, then drink, but I've never been too drunk to fuck and I also have a friend who claims he drinks WHILE he fucks. But I've never met anyone who would RATHER drink than fuck. Proud alcoholism is not a very inspiring theme.

Musically, Gang Green isn't very tight. They've made MTV a few times but I can't imagine them ever selling out. Doherty is the driving force behind the band and he can't sing worth crap. There are a few fun covers but I'm sure if you were in a band for eight years, you could come up with something less feeble than these "hits."

- Cold-Iron

GIRL TROUBLE

Stomp And Shout And Work It On Out, lp
Wig Out, Box 44633, Tacoma, WA 98444

Girl Trouble sounds like band with big titties, mmm. Actually they're four skimpy-lookin' duds who do 60's covers. God, are they ever lame. And one of the remakes is "Louie Louie." Gee, what an original idea.

- Cold-Iron

GOBBLEHOOF

"Gobblehoof," 6 song EP
New Alliance

For a guy who looks like he's always on the verge of falling asleep when he plays guitar, J Mascis is actually a darn good drummer. But no amount of curiosity concerning J's percussion skills could make this record a must-buy. Anyone who says that this doesn't smell an awful lot like Dinosaur Jr. is a liar. And while subtlety isn't the first word that springs to mind when I think of J's other band, Gobblehoof make them sound positively sublime by comparison. Here's hoping this is a "one-shot" deal that stays that way.

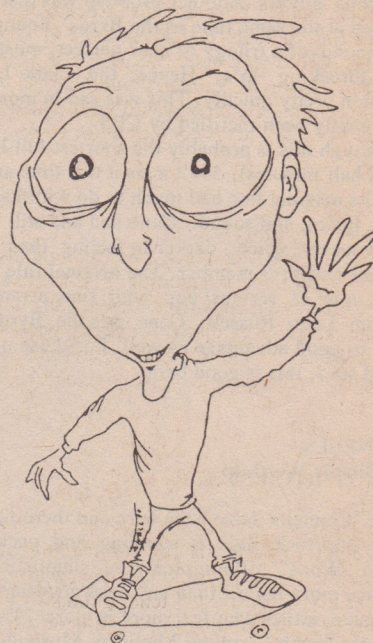
- Sal C.

GEAR DADDIES

Billy's Live Bait, CD
Polygram

Guitar pop with a country twang from Minneapolis. Okay but nothing you haven't heard before. Next.

- Jim T.



GOD'S ACRE

Ten Gospel Greats, lp
Wax Trax

This Chicago trio gets a lot of Sub Pop comparisons but I don't hear it. The songs are far more multi-layered and complex than the usual Sub Pop retro-70's poop. Peter Houpt's vocals get downright possessed at times - this is one band with God in their name that might actually see Him in moments of divine inspiration. Speaking of inspired, check out the rhythm section - killer - and they've got some bitchin' tattoos too. Definitely a combo on the way up.

- Jim T.

GOO GOO DOLLS

Hold Me Up, lp
Metal Blade

I like this album so much that I'm not even going to whine about their fucking cheap moron label sending me a cassette again instead of a CD, even though my name is on the "thank you" list on the liner notes and I practically drove the President and CEO of this label to hari kari at the New Music Seminar with my story about how they sent me another GWAR cassette when I complained about getting the first one. Anyway, this is another non-stop onslaught of high-energy fun from these Buffalo popsters. Once again, Robby Goo's hyper-melodic bass runs up and down the scale carrying the melody while Johnny Goo's claws vicious punk rock chords from his guitar. This time around, the covers include a brilliant version of "A Million Miles Away," the old Plimsouls shoulda-been-a-hit by ex-Buffalonian Peter Case, and the immortal Lance Diamond doing to Prince what he did to Creedence on the band's last lp. Comparisons to the early Replacements are inevitable - a lot of this, especially some of the chord changes and the dopey acoustic ballad at the end, have Westerberg's fingerprints all over them - but the Goo Goo Dolls pretty much stand alone right now as Kings of powerpop punk. (Note to Metal Blade: Send me another cassette of one of your alternative bands and I am going to melt it over the kitchen stove and mail it back to you.)

- Jim T.

HELIOS CREED

Boxing The Clown, lp
Amphetamine Reptile/Twin/Tone

What the hell is this shit doing on an independent label? This Creed character used to be in some SF band called Chrome. That's what I got from the presskit. I never heard of them before. The presskit also describes the music as industrial/psych/mindfuck, which I guess is also true. What the press packet fails to mention, though, is that this band is friggin' cruddy. Where has this Creed character been? This poop sounds like a lost Emerson, Lake & Palmer album...no, it's worse. This sounds like what Jimi Hendrix would've sounded like if he did 'ludes instead of acid. This is cock rock for insecure post punks.

- Ben W.

HI HO SILVER

Hi Ho Silver, EP
Box 2055, 3140 Maassluis, The Netherlands

Yikes, foreigners imitating R.E.M. Actually, this stuff is harder than the gumps from Athens plus it mixes in a little Devo weirdness and even disco. It's pretty good stuff, although a little too polished for me. Combining straight rock with dance music probably isn't going to get them too far, but it's pretty neat anyway.

- Ben W.

ROBYN HITCHCOCK

Eye, lp
Twin/Tone

I don't know if this guy has a legion of dedicated followers who really resent Syd Barrett comparisons, but based on what I've heard in the past, I tend to think Syd when I hear Robyn Hitchcock. But listening to this all-acoustic guitar/piano album, I was happy to find a wider range of styles (some Lennon, a dash of Dylan) forming an individual sound with offbeat lyrics, melodies and vocals...although he doesn't quite have the inspired whimsical genius of...well, you know.

- Bill L.

HULLABALOO

Dead Serious, EP
Toxic Shock

This album's only saving grace is the incorporation of whacked-out horns into Hullabaloo's generic Killdozer/Surfers rip-off ultra-grunge-heavy metal/hard rock alloy.

Fans of heaviness might find some merit in the five originals, but the cover of Led Zep's "Rain Song" stinks like the rot of dead worms after the storm. Thomas Edward Quinn Jr's gravel-gargled vocals are almost as interesting as his horns, but his slur makes the lyrics undecipherable. The only thing you can understand is a spoken-word "sample" of a guy describing "a good hot beer shit."

Need I say more?

JERSEY DOGS

Jersey Dogs, lp
Grudge

Remember in the early 80's when thrash music sounded fresh, and when each new record shaped and molded the genre? That was almost 10 years ago and since then, little has changed. The repetitive speed riffs, the requisite growling vocals, and the double bass drums from hell have become staples of every thrash record, with most bands paying little attention to originality. And therein lies the problem with the Jersey Dogs.

It's not that their music isn't up to par with every other thrash band, or that their sneers couldn't make a baby cry. It's just that we've heard it all before; every riff, every growl, every scream. Heavy metal is like a group of friends who watched pro wrestling when they were 13 years old, and thrash is the guy still watching it at 30.

- Craig D.

KING SWAMP

Wiseblood, lp
Virgin

Ex-Shriekback/Gang Of Four members Dave Allen and Steve Halliwell put out a guitar oriented sound that also encompasses a dance beat. Sultry vocals and a full textural sound come via the production of Bob Clearmountain, whose credits include Springsteen and U2, two musical entities I can't stand (but the production is well done on this anyway).

- Tom B.

KITCHENS OF DISTINCTION

Love Is Hell, lp
Rough Trade

You'll only catch me at a Depeche Mode concert if I have an AK-47 along to keep me company. Suffice to say I have little patience with the gloom brigade. But K.O.D. actually know how to write catchy songs, something that puts them miles ahead of most of their brethren. The true heirs to the Smiths' throne? Will anyone on Ecstasy care?

- Sal C.

LAUGHING HYENAS

Life Of Crime, lp
Touch & Go

The Laughing Hyenas are at the peak of the gut-pound-guitar-noise heap. The all-over-the-place guitars are pared down to work within very well structured, melodic songs. John Brannon's vocal styling is all gruff, guttural and harsh at a 100% energy level, which suits Larissa's amazing enveloping walled-in world-of-noise. That one guitarist can do so much is indeed impressive. Put the record on loud and you'll see what I mean. Kevin Strickland's jugular "big throb" bass playing is noticeably evil, and I am equally impressed by Jimbo Kimball's drumming. This band totally works together to flail out and reach the heights of wild rock ugliness.

- Terry T.



LAUGHING HYENAS

Photo by Michele Taylor

THE MIGHTY BOSSSTONES

Devil's Night Out, lp

Taang, Box 51, Auburndale MA 02166

Before listening to this record, I read the press release to get an idea of what the band was about. It was supposed to be a ska band with various members who were formerly in punk bands like Gang Green and Impact Unit. Huh? So I'm listening to the first song and decided the press release was a joke, 'cause it had a metalcore intro.. until SMACK! right in my face I started to skank (and even my mom joined in, but that's another story.) There's a Bim Skala Bim influence here - they're both from Massachusetts, but there's always a hard edge in there too. Especially in the singing and guitar. Songs like "Howwhywuz Howwhyham" and "Hope I Never Lose My Wallet" prove to people who think that ska is limiting and stagnant that there's room for movement (and fun!), just like Operation Ivy's lp did last year.

- Tom A.

MOON

Questionable Places & Things, lp

Skyclad

I would guess this band takes a lot of acid. The singer mumbles in a monotone and the music is slow and in tune. The lyrics are mostly about horror and paranoia. There are 12 songs but they all sound the same, but as I sit here flipping the record over & over, it seems to be getting better and better; it's hypnotic as hell. I think I'm going insane...and I like it.

- Cold-Iron

MORE FIENDS

Toad Lickin', LP

Rave, Box 40075, Philadelphia PA 19106

I fell asleep during this so I didn't get to listen to the whole thing. What I did hear was sloppy, noisy shit that was hip before SST bands started signing to majors. Pretty boring. While it was playing, I dreamt that I was a secret agent for the FBI in Madison and I had a bald head. Bobsledding was involved too, but if you're really interested, you can write me for details.

- Ben W.

NAKED RAYGUN

Raygun...Naked Raygun, CD

Caroline

Mostly this sticks to the usual Raygun sound, revved up a bit by the addition of Bill Stephens on guitar, who does a fine job replacing John Haggerty. Almost all the songs here hew to the predictable Raygun formulas, with "Fever Island" the Misfits-ish pop-punk hit with the "whoa-whoa-whoa" chorus. "Jazz Gone Bad" lives up to its title (stick to punk, guys) and "Camarilla" may be their dopiest lyric ever, but all in all, a solid effort and if you're already a fan, you'll want to add this to your collection.

- Jim T.

THE NEIGHBORHOODS

Hoodwinked, lp

Roadracer

Didn't these guys used to be a crummy pop band? Now they're a crummy rock band, and I mean ROCK. Think The Eagles, but dumber. Think Sammy Hagar. Think Kiss' "Unmasked" lp. Soon to be available in your favorite record store's 99 cent bin.

- Ben W.

NEVADA BEACH

Zero Day, lp

Metal Blade

Mersh-metal all the way, dude! Nevada Beach have been around quite a while, but take their greatest bow to MTV with Zero Day. Vocalist/lead guitarist Hank Deckan gives us half AC/DC, half Axl Rose vocals atop homogeneous pop metal riffs with late 80's Kiss-style backing vocals. They even credit someone on the label as their "hair/makeup" person. Sheesh!

- Johnny P.

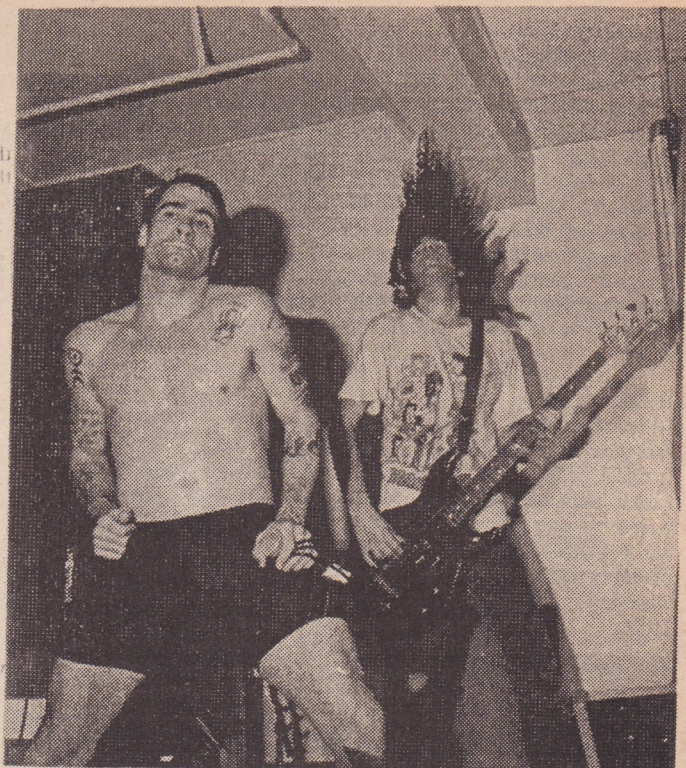


Photo by Shawn Scallen

ROLLINS

PAIN TEENS

Born In Blood, lp

Trance, Box 35709, Houston TX 77235

Imagine taking parts from Scratch Acid, Mudhoney, Butthole Surfers and quite a bit of Foetus. There you have Pain Teens. If that sounds good to you, find this record, because it's an excellent release. It's good to see a cool band like this come along amidst the slew of formula hardcore bands out today.

- Jamie T.

PEGBOY

Three Chord Monte, 12" EP

1/4 Stick/Touch & Go

I'm surprised Touch & Go had anything to do with this fun, basic punk record. While Naked Raygun withers and dies, Pegboy seems to be ready to kick the Rayguns over the edge. I didn't think it was possible for John and Joe Haggerty (ex-Raygun guitarist and Bloodsport/Effigies drummer, respectively) to move onto something worthwhile, but they actually "downgraded" instead of moving on to a more mature form of music. Pegboy isn't just yankin' your chain when they talk about three chords. This is no-frills pop punk, perhaps given its edge by the presence of ex-Bhopal Stiffs Larry Damore and Steve Saylor. Members of well known bands forming new bands rarely work out, but Pegboy seems to have a better angle on writing good songs than any of their former associates. The fucking Chicago Tribune liked this and for once, the chuckleheads are right. Don't tell me about Chicago punk, this is it.

- Ben Weasel

PELICAN CROOK

Baptism By Fire, cassette

PO Box 781, Graham, NC 27253

Pelican Crook is two brothers covering all the generic boring garage-rock licks they've learned thus far, combined with the most glaringly atonal, screeching, shameful vocals I've ever heard. My advice is to give the singer a quick course in melody and/or a hearing aid. This sucks.

- Johnny P.



SOUL ASYLUM

PHLEG CAMP

Demo tape

48 Sanderson Cresc, Richmond Hill Ont. Canada L4C 5C4

Power. Depth. Soul.

This is the ultimate rasp-vocalized bass-driven emo-core trio. I've read and heard several Soulside comparisons and the odd Fugazi one, but where other bands (who shall remain nameless) rip off an exact meter, drum or guitar style, Phleg Camp independently build on their own style, which acknowledges those Dischordian greats (as well as jazz, pop, and reggae). Not only does the music kick, but the engineering and production on this cassette are the best I've ever heard. Two of the seven tracks were Phleg Camp's contribution to the split 7" with Fuel. This is well worth the six bucks they want for it.

- Shawn S.

QUEENSRYPHE

Empire, lp

EMI

On Empire, Queensryche's latest lp, the band has suppressed any desire to record Operation: Mindcrime Part II and has put a lid on a great deal of their anger to record an album so personal that, at times, you feel like you're peeking in on the neighbors through their bedroom window.

Chris DeGarmo and Michael Wilton have better chops than their performances on Empire show. Too much energy seeps out of the music when the band reaches for a more intricate and orchestrated sound; they ultimately get too caught up and distracted by their arrangements. On first listen, the album sounds timid and flat. It's not until you read through the lyrics and experience the music that you realize its power, power born of love, hate, anger, and depression. And that's why this disc will come to mean more to a Queensryche fan than any past project.

- Craig D.

RAILWAY CHILDREN

Native Place, lp

Virgin

Love found, love lost, young and out of place, but looking for a place to hide, all the while not understanding... or something to that effect. Four guys from England with a contemporary sound that can be compared to a somewhat low-key version of the Godfathers. Nice and not overpowering.

- Tom B.

RED BLISS

Fishkill, lp

Axis/Rough Trade

Sludge rock that calls to mind Killdozer, Helmet, the Bastards and Pussy Galore, but not nearly as good or original. Still, the effort is quite enjoyable when cranked up loud on a cheap stereo with a bad needle (which basically sums up my "hifi" system.)

The lp does have its moments, though, with tunes like "Brigade," "Revolving Door," and "We Said." "Cows" is my favorite track, with its almost catchy psychedelic sludge, like newer B.Surfers on a swinging acid trip with Urge Overkill. (The lp is on limited edition clear vinyl, for you collector scum.)

- Terry Telenko

ROLLINS BAND

Turned On, lp (1/4 Stick/Touch & Go)

WARTIME

Fast Food For Thought, EP (Chrysalis)

Rollins Band is quickly catching up to the Bad Brains in the number of live recordings available (if you own a CD player, that is.) This latest one, recorded live in Austria in '89, is the best yet. The performances are great and the sound is fantastic (it doesn't hurt to take your own soundman on tour with you!). Even the stuff off of Hard Volume is listenable in this new context. I only hope some recordings become available for the band with Sim's brother on sax. He played with them at City Gardens and I never thought Rollins could get so loose!

War-time should have been the funky mind-fuck that the Rollins Band were that night, but the music (all played by Andrew) is just too redundant to sustain any prolonged interest. And Henry hits some absolute lyrical low points on the song "Right To Life: "I gotta right to live/I gotta right to give" (!!!) C'mon, Henry, you can come up with better "raps" than that.

- Sal C.

SCHNITT-ACHT PROJECT

"Fire"/"Grouch" 12 inch EP and Subhuman Minds, lp

Cheetah Records, 3208 E Colonial Dr #131C, Orlando FL 32803

A very highly abrasive industro-disco dance noise band, calling to mind the loudest and nastiest of Tackhead, Ministry, Skinny Puppy and Laibach. The 12" of "Fire" is so aggro-abrasive in places that even if you don't like industrial acid dance music, you can appreciate the sheer anger of it. The lp, Subhuman Minds, is more of the same - highly digital leatherclad biker disco acid synth with some hefty gruff madman vocals on top. Not my style, really, but this is an excellent example of where industrial dance music is headed.

- John L.

SKIN YARD

Fist Sized Chunks, lp

Cruz, PO Box 7756, Long Beach CA 90807

Steady, moody, pounding Black Sabbath-ish music that is done too well for its own good. The album had an empty feel to it because it all seemed so lifeless. Kind of like hiring studio musicians to play from sheet music. This will surely find a crowd and it's a totally different direction for Cruz Records, so all the more to 'em.

- Tom A.

SOUL ASYLUM

And The Horse They Rode In On, lp
A&M

Quite a dynamic range on this album, from the usual raw pop type thing that they do so well to some mellower stuff. The countryish "Brand New Shine" and "Something Out Of Nothing" recalls the glory days when Edgar Winter and Rick Derringer used to play together. Oww-rite!!! But why listen to a review in some dorky fanzine when Keith Richard has already stuck his haggard thumb in the air over this album?

- Bill Lutz

SUPERCHUNK

Superchunk, CD
Matador

This North Carolina quartet has come up with a damn near perfect synthesis of catchy pop-rock and Lower East Side grungy noise. From the trebley/distorted guitars to Mac's endearingly pubescent vocals (sounds like his voice is still changing, although he's a lot older than that), the songs just soar on the pure joy of making noise, summed up rather nicely in the anthemic "My Noise." Ten songs and not a wasted cut among them. Primo.

- Jim T.

TELEVISION PERSONALITIES

Privilege, lp

Fire, 475 Greenwich, New York NY 10013

There is always an enigmatic group whose cutting edge sound is not noticed until commercially successful bands admit to being influenced by it. Artists like R.E.M. were followers of Pylon and The Seed. The Clash were heavy Ramones fans. Many English bands have been hanging in there since the early 80's and have watched Ecstasy-damaged musicians slither up from the underground using their styles and gaining the glory. Television Personalities is one of the Post-Modern originals. It's interesting to hear how their sound is used by the Stone Roses, Charlatans UK and the spectrum of pseudo-hippies climbing the charts these days. Privilege is the long-awaited (five years to be exact) release from this timeless North London band.

The album is a satisfying blend of breezy, charming songs spiced with the right amount of psychedelia. From beautiful, wispy songs like "Paradise For The Blessed," to the macabre "All My Dreams Are Dead," this album remains remarkable. "Salvador Dali's Garden Party" is a charismatic track filled with laughter, clinking glasses, and name dropping, using wonderful production touches in the spirit of the Beatles. The title track, smooth with lush guitar strokes, is a thought-provoking finale to this record.

Longevity has honed TVP into a mature, confident band. Privilege is different and, perhaps, more commercially accessible than their previous releases; however, it reveals why they are groundbreakers for other bands but Rip Van Winkles to the world. Maybe they're just too good for the masses.

- Debi R.

THEE HEADCOATS

Heavens To Murgatroyd, lp

Sub-Pop

Fronted by Billy Childish (someone I've never heard of, although he's apparently released dozens of albums, written books, etc etc), Thee Headcoats is obviously on Sub-Pop because of Mudhoney's strong liking for Childish's work. This is kind of R&B garage mixed with - dare I say it? - art rock. Some tunes are cool and funny, and the cover art is great, but I'm a lunkhead because I feel like I missed the joke. Sorry.

- Tom A.

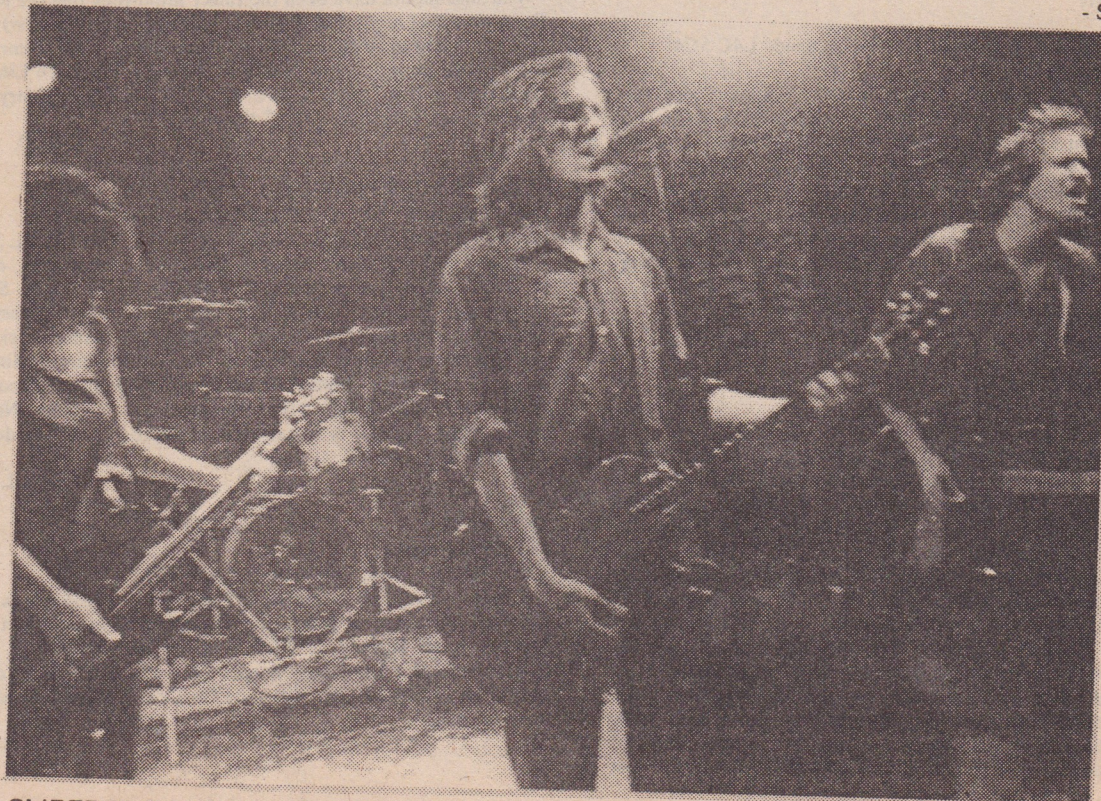
THEE HYPNOTICS

Come Down Heavy, lp

Beggars Banquet

Spin after spin, I tried to enjoy this record but to no avail. Then I hit on the solution. Why not pretend that Come Down Heavy is a long-lost Stooges dalbum, recorded somewhere between Funhouse and Raw Power? Yeah, that's the ticket! Seriously, there's nothing wrong with a little thievery (in fact, it's what rock 'n roll is built on) but if Iggy was ever to run short of cash, I know a few lawyers who'd say that he has a damn good plagiarism suit on his hands with this one.

- Sal C.



SUPERCHUNK

Photo by Jim Testa

UNCLE TUPELO

No Depression, lp
Rockville Records

With lots of press in 1990, including Rolling Stone, Uncle Tupelo seem to be among the freshest new faces of the year. Even before the hype, I came to the same conclusion. The band has a jangly guitar twang with foot-tapping rhythm. One minor trouble is their strange habit of starting a song with a slow, steady tempo, then suddenly speeding it up. This not only sounds awkward but makes it sound like the band is losing interest in the track and spicing it up by playing faster. It doesn't work. Despite this peeve, this album is fun and produced a most positive recommendation from moi.

- Debi R.

VICTIM'S FAMILY

White Bread Blues, lp
Mordam, PO Box 988, San Francisco CA 94101

Victim's Family writes about "the United States Of Generica," and puts down club kids "cruising the clubs...with the CMJ in your hand," and there's even a line about "they sent our brothers off to die in Vietnam." Okay, so I have a problem with the lyrics. For one thing, I don't think Canada is such an unimpeachable beacon of human rights and democracy that this band has to spend all their time taking pot shots at the U.S.A. And secondly, isn't this preaching to the converted? It reminds me of Jello Biafra's spoken word shows...anybody likely to listen to this in the first place is probably already thinking the same way.

Musically, my hat's off to this trio. They do the jazzcore thing about as well as anyone around right now, mixing up hi-octane hardcore with nifty chord changes, weird tempos, and jazzy riffs that always have you guessing where a song will go next. The more oblique lyrics, like "Caged Bird" and "Mousetrap" are damn near brilliant, but I'd like to see them write some songs about political concerns closer to home instead of taking so many cheap shots at their big dopey ally across the border.

- Jim T.

VOMIT LAUNCH

Mr. Spench, lp
Mad Rover/Rough Trade

A more subdued and reflective effort for Vomit Launch. Pretty and sad rock which seems to have a New Zealand pop influence like the Chills or Bats, especially on "Bug Under A Magnifying Glass." Expressive vocals call to mind Salem 66 in places, with intricate harmonies and chorus. The band experiments on "Proven Parts" with a long, psychedelic Mid-Eastern instrumental intro and fairly rock out on the humorous hate tune, "Dog Sauce." "Every Pretty Girl" by World Of Pooh's Barbara Manning is also done here. My favorite track is "Pay Your Rent," in which VL really articulate a wistful sorrow on a musical level. A fine release from a band that only gets better with age.

- Terry T.

WORRY DOLLS

Devils Welding Scimitars, lp
Rough Trade

This album opens with such an ear-catching track that one would suspect the rest of the album must be the same. It is.. all the same. This work is very nice, lovely actually, but it falls short of grabbing the attention of the restless thrill seeker. Nothing here has that special "oomph" or a smattering of grunge to balance out the sweetness. Worry Dolls are nice, but sugar and spice just doesn't grab me.

- Debi R.

COMPILATIONS

BRAIN COOKIES, Double lp
New Alliance, Box 1389, Lawndale CA 90260

This double live album collects bands that have played on Splat Winger's "Brain Cookies" radio show in Los Angeles. New

Alliance is the perfect label for this, and if that makes sense to you, you kind of have an idea of what this is like. Sound quality is pretty good and the music is well balanced through the four sides. Bands that I liked were FIREHOSE, Roger Miller, Screaming Trees, Paper Bag (always interesting since they're an improv band, so you'll never hear this stuff again!), Brother Awest, Crimony and 5UU's. 22 "bands" altogether.

- Tom A.

HARD TO BELIEVE A KISS COVER COMPILATION, lp
C/Z, 1407 E. Madison, Seattle WA 98122

Sounded like a killer idea - all these cool bands remaking shitty Kiss songs. But except for Skynyrd, every one sounds like Kiss. Remember when the Dickies remade "Nights In White Satin," or the Butthole Surfers did "American Woman?" Isn't that the punk thing, combining old style rock 'n roll with today's energy? I started hanging out at punk bars so I could get away from cover bands. This lp is like a Kiss Greatest Hits album.

- Cold-Iron

OUR FATHERS WHO AREN'T IN HEAVEN, double-lp
Widowspeak

A double album by four spoken word artists - Don Bajema, Hubert Selby Jr, Lydia Lunch and Henry Rollins - in a heavy tribute to maleness, featuring topics like violence, sadomasochism, the military, plus dominating dads and scary women. All the things that make being a guy so special. Most impressive is Lydia Lunch, for playing the Big Baby Trapped Inside The Body Of An Adult Male Game with some real champs and taking the challenge head on, doing a piece of her own as well as her interpretations of pieces by the other three performers. And when she reads Rollins, talking about "beating off in a hot bathroom," she doesn't need to wear the strap-on dildo that Henry probably needed to write it. On the whole, this is a diverse collection by four interesting artists, but it IS a spoken word album, and I don't know if I'll ever get the urge to listen to it again.

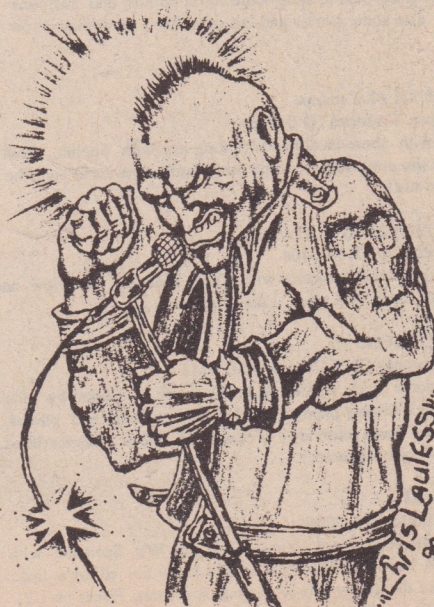
- Bill L.

WHERE'S STANTON PARK?

Stanton Park Records, Box 58, Newville MA 02160

This is a good compilation because all the bands, even though from Boston, have a unique sound. Most are melodic noise, in the Moving Targets vein. A good chance to check out some Boston bands that really should be getting some attention soon.

- Jamie T.



Fanzines

All fanzine prices include postage.

AGAINST THE GRAIN #1 \$1

% David Koenig, 1350 SouthWood Ave #C3, Linden NJ 07036

Dave Koenig has been a regular in the NY/HC scene for a long time, involved with various zine and label projects. Here he is again with a new one. Dave's known for not liking anything, but there's a positive interview with Chris Boarts about her Slug & Lettuce zine and some lists of things Dave does like (mostly old tv programs and movies), and a riff about how he can't find a girlfriend... You get the idea.

ANOTHER PAIR OF SHOES #4 \$1

% Tim Kelly, 2398 Jansen Ave, White Bear Lk, Mn 55110

A little bit of everything in this fairly small zine - some political and social musings, band interviews, photos, and an interview with Paul Weinman (White Boy).

BAREFEET FANZINE, #2 2 stamps

7514 Highland St, Springfield VA 22150

Most of this issue is taken up with an Intensive Care interview, plus some reviews. They promise that #3 will be bigger.

BRAIN CANCER #3 \$1.50

% Mike Canich, Box 31, Romeo MI 48065

Most of Brain Cancer is devoted to editor Mike Canich's disturbing comic strips. This issue begins one called "The Politics Of Suffering," a meditation on sex and violence. There are also usually some stream of consciousness editorials and a few video and record reviews.

BUTT UGLY #3 \$1.50

701 So Grand Ave, Waukesha WI 53186

Pretty cool punk zine centering around the Milwaukee scene (which seems to be a lot of fun and if not big, at least busy). Band interviews, reviews, and photos, plus a meditation by the teenage editor in which he suspects he might be bi sexual, and a funny page devoted to explaining straight edge to the uninitiated.

CHAIRS MISSING "Ex Lion Tamer Issue" \$1.50

PO Box 375, Fairfield CT 06430-0375

A good year after Scott Munroe retired, he's not only still doing a fanzine but showing at the New Music Seminar and CMJ on a press pass. And you didn't think fanzines were addictive. This ish has a Galaxie 500 interview and Scott's adventures traipsing up and down the east coast following the Sonic Youth tour.

CLEAN ZINE #2 (Free, but send 2 stamps)

1480 Rte 46, #150A, Parsippany NJ 07034

Most of this is devoted to skateboarding in photos and cartoons but there are also some stories and cut-outs from newspapers on various issues.

COTTONMOUTH #1 2 stamps

11 Dunham Ave, Cranford NJ 07016

Interviews with some local bands (a long one with Shelter about krishna-ism in the punk scene), some nasty fanzine reviews, and the usual punkzine stuff.

DECONTROL #10:23:06 2 STAMPS

Box 404, Duluth GA 30136-0404

Pretty basic xeroxed punkzine with a Pink Lincolns interview and some reviews of music and zines. Lots of room to grow.

DRASTIC SOLUTIONS #3

2 Embro Dr, Toronto ONT Canada M3H 2M8

This didn't come with a price on it; it's worth 2 bucks by zine standards, easily. Glossy paper with hi quality printing and photos, and well written band interviews (Friends Of Music, Brotherhood, Sons Of Ishmael and Malhavoc).

FIREZONE #4 \$3

PO Box 2575, Reston VA 22090

Well, okay, the cover's got a pic of Toad The Wet Sprocket with the headline: A Band For The 90's, so you know the editor's taste runs a tad toward the gooey side of the pop spectrum. Pieces on U2, the Connells, Maria McKee, Sinead O'Connor, and The Church all

speak from the heart of a fan, though. One interesting note: this zine is done completely by computer with desktop publishing software, including the photos.

FRONTSIDE #5 \$1.50

2214 Lake Forest, San Bernadino CA 92407

1/2 size skate zine with lots of photos plus some music reviews and cartoons. Pretty cool.

INSTANT GRATIFICATION #1 \$4

% L Walczak, 803 Park Ave, Hoboken NJ 07030

This isn't worth 4 bucks but it is a pretty good debut issue, with pieces about "popular culture, alternative rock, and so-called new art," including Eric Bogosian, the Mudmen, the Residents, Timbuk 3, and the Pussywillows. Very well written but for 4 bucks, I expect a lot more visually or at least a flexi disc stuck in there.

JACKHAMMER POGOSTICK #5 \$1.65

2425 Holly Hall #F-77, Houston TX 77054

A fat half-size zine formerly from Erie, although the editor's relocated to Texas. Tons of stuff to read, including another version of The Lost tour diary that appeared in Jersey Beat #41, Henry Rollins, All, Libido Boyz, reviews, and a lot of photos. Cool.

L'IL RHINO GAZETTE #6 \$2.65

PO Box 14139, Arlington TX 76094-1139

Nothing very fancy here, just a lot of good interviews and reviews in a straightforward half-size format. A good zine that'll take a few sittings to read all the through. Recommended.

NOT FOR THE WEAK #2 \$1.65

%George Norton, 36 Newell Pl, N. Arlington NJ 07032

A coupla guys from the K.P.M. (Kearny Punkrock Mafia) put this zine out, so you know it's gonna be full of two-fisted hard punk, with a Bud in each fist. Interviews with Killing Time, Born Against, Supertouch and Gorilla Biscuits take up most of the zine, with some reviews (records, zines, and gore flicks) and lots of photos.

NO ANSWERS #9 \$4

PO Box 680, Goleta CA 93116

Now this zine is worth \$4 because it comes with a 7" by Downcast, and it's a treat for the eyes as well, loaded with great photos by editor Kent McClard. Pieces on Admiral, Judge, Downcast, and Fuel, plus opinions, politics, and no paid advertising. One of my favorite zines.

PAVEMENT OF SURFACE #5 \$2

% Queer Riot Press, 2236 Market, #133 San Francisco CA 94114

Although ostensibly a homopunk zine, Pavement Of Surface seems less concerned with gay erotica (of which there's little beyond a satiric comic strip) or even gay politics. Mostly it's just the rantings of a bunch of people who are really fed up with the system, whether it's manifested as religion, pop culture, or pollution.

PHOTODROME #2

%Rito Laberto, 26 Distin Ave, Toronto ONT Canada M8Z 3R7

Why don't fanzines put prices on their covers? Well, figure this one's worth about \$3 given the postage. It's a big photozine on heavy stock, nicely printed, full of pix of hardcore bands in action (including many we don't get to see in the States). Great if you're into scene photos.

PIMP #2 \$2.25

% Kelly, 505 W 24 St #102, Austin TX 78705

Most of the Austin scene is composed of rednecks, frat boys, and disco queens, but the part that's left over drops a lot of acid and produces some fucked up shit (Butthole Surfers, Nice Strong Arm, Scratch Acid and Ed Hall are all alumni). We can safely assume that the editors of Pimp come from the latter camp. Pieces on GWAR and Jesus Lizard hew to the punkzine standard, but then there's the story about how they wandered into a funeral parlor after hours and interviewed the mortician, or the interview with a warlock. Get the picture?

Fanzines

ROCK AROUND THE WORLD
PO Box 40684, Portland OR 97232

Okay, here's an idea: a small-press zine devoted to tours. Most of this is just tour itineraries that bands send in, plus a few articles like live reviews. I wouldn't actually recommend that anybody buy this but if you're in a band and going on tour, it certainly couldn't help to send them your itinerary and get listed in here.

SABOO SEZ #1 Free (with a stamp)
253-25 86 Ave, Bellerose NY 11426

You're gonna have to catch the editors giving this away at a show, probably down at an ABC No Rio matinee, if you want to be sure of getting one, although you can try writing. I have no idea how much of this to take seriously; it purports to include interviews with Tim Yohannon, Green Day, and Filth, with a page of silly comix.

SKULL SESSION #18 \$1.65
% Brad Mitchell, 2187 Keynes Ct Mississauga ONT, Canada L5N 2Z7

If this is really the 18th issue, this zine should really look a little better than it does. Otherwise, pro forma punkzine with band interviews (running toward the obscure, like Sanity Assassins and Scruffy Tearaways), reviews, and comix.

SNOT RAG #1 \$1(?)
Karl King, PO Box 1330, Hagersville Ont, Canada N0A 1H0

So some guy in a little town decides to get off his ass and stop complaining about the hardcore scene and do something, so he puts together his own fanzine. It's a story that's been told a thousand times but everytime I pick up a new zine like this, I really believe in the power of music to change people's lives. Anyway, good start here - UK Subs, Problem Children, Ultraman, even our own Gutwrench!

SOLID FOUNDATION #1 \$1.65
% Pete Reilly, 20 Worths Mill Ln, Princeton NJ 08540
Lots of hardcore bands and what I think is an ancient photo of Richie Underdog on the cover. Editor Pete likes straight edge bands so that's what you get, in interviews, reviews, and photos.

SPHERE OF INFLUENCE #1 \$1.50
PO Box 7085, Penndel PA 19047
Nice looking debut issue with Ween, All, and an interview with a hooker on the streets of Trenton.

SPITE #1 \$1.50
% G. Thompson, 418 Pennington Ln, Louisville KY 40207

A little lacking visually but it's only a first issue... Otherwise, all the usual punkzine staples - band interviews, reviews, and an offbeat piece about our friend the Rat, including advice on how to control the vermin if you've got rats in your building. I'm looking forward to more from these guys.

STRAIGHT OUT #7 \$1.50
16339 Steubner-Airline #205, Spring TX 77379

1/2 size zine with a mixture of music (mostly punk), poetry (ditto), columns (including one for vegetarians) and fiction, with nice clean layouts. Lots to read for a buck.

TECHNOLOGY WORKS #3 \$1
PO Box 477, Placentia CA 92670
1/2 size zine devoted to industrial bands. Revolting Cocks, Nine Inch Nails and some reviews make up this issue.

TRACTION #1 \$1.50
PO Box 71033, Milwaukee WI 53211

Yipes, another zine out of Milwaukee. There's a fanzine boom out there. Nothing really news here, just some band interviews done at shows in town and short reviews, with a dark pasteup layout style that looks like Profane Existence.

UNSEEN BY MOST \$1
% Scooter Hanson, 11788 Red Fox Dr, Maple Grove MN 55369
Scooter is a great photographer and this photozine collects some of his best work, plus photos by his cohort Jason Parker. Scooter is very bad at answering his mail however so if you write for this, don't hold your breath waiting for it.

VILLAGE NOIZE #10 \$2.50
48-54 213 St, Bayside NY 11364
This is starting to rival Alternative Press for classy good looks, what with its two-color cover and great layouts. Inside you'll find well-written pieces on lots of cool bands - most of whom sell way more records than the bands in Jersey Beat, but what are ya gonna do? This ish has Jane's Addiction, Happy Mondays, Foetus, Sun Ra, and lots more, with plenty of terrific photos.

THURSDAYS THURSDAYS

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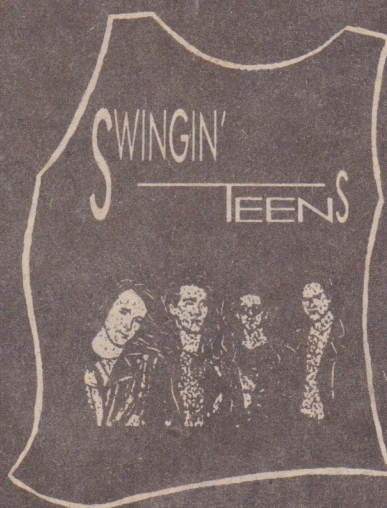
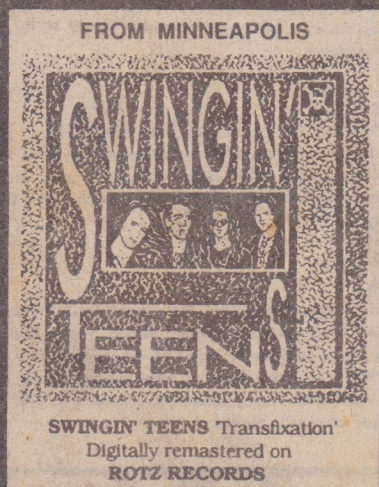
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